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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in the New York State Library (NYSL) during 1 week in October 1981 to determine characteristics of traffic rates, user intent, and user status of visitors. Visitors were counted and recorded at 15-minute intervals and a sampling of visitors was administered surveys on leaving the main portion of NYSL through the single public access on the seventh floor and the separately accessible 11th floor research room for historical and archival materials. Completed interviews represented a 16.4 percent sample of all visitors in the main area of the NYSL and 21 percent in the history/archival reading room. Findings of the study in the main area include user traffic averaging 332.9 visits per day by 281 visitors; 46 percent of the visits were for searching material on some topic, 12 percent for genealogy research, and 17 percent for viewing a known publication. Findings for the main area are compared with those of a study conducted in March 1981 and with those for the research room. Future research studies are discussed. Provided are 15 figures, 28 tables, and 3 references. (Author/RBF)

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Studies of Use of the New York State Library

Report No. 2

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School of Library and Information Science
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January 25, 1982

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Abstract

A study was conducted of use and users of the New York State Library (NYSL) during one week of October 1981, to determine characteristics of traffic rates, user intent, and user status. The study repeated an earlier study made in March 1981, and extended its scope to cover use of the detached history/archives research room as well as the main NYSL area. The study addressed only use of NYSL by visitors, excluding all non-visitor use.

A count was made of all visitors exiting each area of NYSL during each 15-minute interval throughout the entire 5-day, 40-hour test period. Also, short interviews were conducted with a substantial sampling of the exiting visitors. Interview results made it possible to adjust traffic data to correct for inadvertant counting of library staff members among the visitors. In turn, traffic counts were used to calculate appropriate weightings to correct for differences in sampling rates for interview results obtained from different time periods. In the main area of NYSL, the refusal rate for interviews was 8 percent, and completed interviews represented a 16.4 percent sample of all visits. For the history/archives reading area, the refusal rate was almost 21 percent, but the interviews completed represented a 47 percent sample of the much lower visitor traffic.

In the main area of NYSL, user traffic averaged 332.9 visits per day by 281 different visitors. Calculating from visitors' estimates of the frequency of any prior visits, the projections for annual visits to the main area of NYSL are about 84,000 visits per year by about 20,700 different individuals. The profile of exit traffic throughout the day is one of steady increase through the morning to a level that stays fairly constant through the afternoon except for a surge near closing time. The profile for entry traffic derived from interview data, is almost the mirror image. Occupancy of the NYSL main area by visitors averaged about 47, or about 14 percent of the daily total of visits; it is below average in the first and last hour or so of the day and above average through the middle hours of the day.

Almost 46 percent of visits to the main area were for the purpose of searching for material on some topic; genealogy research accounted for another 12 percent of visits; about 17 percent were to look at a known publication. About 80 percent of non-casual visits were successful; librarian assistance was used in slightly more than half of these visits.

Comparison of results for the main NYSL area with results of the earlier (March) study revealed both differences and similarities. The volume of visitor traffic in the present study was about ten percent less than in the March study. The difference was not across the board for all users and is probably not a random variation in sampling; it came mainly from sharply decreased visits in connection with New York State government activity, suggesting the possibility of regular annual activity cycles linked to the state government calendar. The profile of traffic flow throughout the day remained very similar for the two studies, suggesting that rather accurate monitoring of visitor draffic could be accomplished using only fairly short daily counts of either exit traffic or library occupants.

Visitor traffic in the history/archives research room averaged under 26 visits per day, less than 8 percent of the volume in the main area. The profiles of visits in the two areas have roughly similar characteristics, but differ in several respects. In the research room, visits tend to be shorter (medians about 29 vs. 48 minutes, averages about 53 vs. 72 minutes); the average occupancy rate is a smaller percentage of the daily total of visits; visitors make fewer repeat visits to NYSL during the course of a year; use for government-related purposes is less and use for personal purposes is greater; use by government personnel is less; the user-perceived success rate is somewhat lower; visits for genealogy are proportionally greater. Many research room visitors also visit the main area of NYSL on the same day.

Unsolicited comments by visitors regarding NYSL were mostly complimentary, especially of the service provided by staff. The comments also suggest that visitors would appreciate extension of visiting hours to weekends and evenings, and that users of the photocopying equipment would appreciate installation of a change-making machine.

Possibilities for continuing and extended research studies are outlined.

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Introduction

A series of studies of the use of the New York State Library (NYSL), Cultural Education Center, Albany, was initiated in March 1981. At that time, a one-week survey of exit traffic was conducted. All visitors using the main portion of NYSL, accessible through the 7th floor entry, were counted; a substantial sampling were interviewed. Results obtained from that survey were presented in a report (1) that is hereafter referred to as Report No. 1. The results included useful information on such matters as: gross volume of visitor traffic, length of visits, distribution of traffic by day of week and time of day, NYSL occupancy profile throughout the day, frequency distribution for repeat visits to NYSL by the same user throughout the year, projections of number of visits and number of different persons visiting NYSL over longer time periods, profile of principal reasons for visiting NYSL, profile of visitors affiliations, and unsolicited comments about NYSL practices and services made to the interviewers by visitors.

This report deals with results of a second one-week survey of NYSL exit traffic, conducted in mid-October 1981. Its design was very similar to that of the first survey, and its main objective was to help determine whether, and how, visitor use of NYSL varies throughout the year. Further surveys of this type are projected, at first to complete the picture of seasonal variations, and then to provide information on year-to-year trends and to help answer new questions requiring study.

The second (October) survey was somewhat broader in scope than the first survey. It extended the measurement of NYSL visitor traffic to the auxiliary 11th-floor research room for historical and archival materials.

The research team that accomplished the data collection in this survey included Cheryl V. Reeves, Joan Griffith, Karen Levi, Carolyn A. Lipetz, Michael McCoy, Fred Tolman III, and Mary Jane Walsh. Two members of this group had recently completed and four were in the process of completing the master's degree program of the School of Library

and Information Science, State University of New York at Albany. Mr. Peter Paulson, NYSL Director, and his staff participated in the design of the interview form used in the survey. The NYSL staff also provided valuable assistance with the tasks of typing and duplicating the interview form and this report.

Readers of this report should bear in mind the limitations of the survey. It was not a comprehensive survey of all uses of NYSL. Only use of NYSL by visitors was studied; use of NYSL by means of U.S. mail, interagency mail, telephone, telex, and computer network was not studied at this time. Also, it should be recognized that the extrapolations and projections derived from this survey are tentative. They are based on the sampling of only a few days out of a year. Modifications must be expected when and as sampling is extended in the future; increased sampling will, of course, improve the reliability of such projections.

Method

General

In most respects, the study methods were identical to those employed in the first (March 1981) survey. Since Report No. 1 describes those methods in detail, this report will simply outline the study plan; details of method will be described only in instances where they differ from the first survey.

The survey covered a full week of NYSL visitor exit traffic, Tuesday, October 13, through Monday, October 19, 1981. The open hours were 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday — unchanged from March. As before, visitors were counted and interviewed on leaving the main portion of NYSL through the single public access on the 7th floor. In addition, this time, visitors were counted and interviewed on leaving the separately-accessible 11th-floor research room for historical materials. This research room is managed jointly by NYSL and the New York State Archives since it provides materials from both collections; the visitor traffic is only a small fraction of the 7th-floor traffic.

After collection, data from the survey were reduced and tabulated; as before, appropriate statistical adjustments were made for erroneous counting of staff members as visitors, and for fluctuations in the ratio of completed interviews to exit counts throughout the day. Results were compiled to profile 7th-floor and 11th-floor usage. Also, results of the first and second surveys were compared.

Exit Traffic Counting

As before, exiting visitors were counted by an observer throughout the day, and counts were recorded for each 15-minute interval. Members of the NYSL staff were not to be counted, but they could not always be recognized by the observer. The overcount was later corrected on the basis of information obtained from interviewing. The daily correction factors that were determined ranged between 0 and 9 percent. The average daily correction was 5 percent; in the March survey it was 9 percent.

Interviewing

As before, the general interviewing plan was to obtain one or more interviews during each 15-minute interval throughout the day, starting always with the first visitor to exit after the start of an interval. In the March survey, two or more interviews were to be sought in each interval; but this led to unnecessarily heavy sampling during what proved to be low traffic hours in the morning. Therefore, in the October survey, the practice was altered to seek only one interview per interval before noon, two interviews per interval from noon until 4:30 p.m., and three interviews in the two high-traffic intervals from 4:30 until 5 p.m. This plan resulted in a more nearly uniform ratio of interviews to exit traffic throughout the day (although corrective verifying factors were still applied in analyzing interview results). It yielded an over-all main-area sampling ratio of 16.4 percent, which was less irritating to NYSL visitors than the 25 percent sampling ratio that was applied in the March survey.

Approximately 60 interviews were conducted each day in the 7th floor, compared to about 90 per day in March. On the 11th floor, there were frequent intervals without traffic; only about a dozen or so interviews were conducted each day. The lower activity rate on the 11th floor made it possible for a single investigator to handle both the traffic counting and the interviewing. On the 7th floor, a separate person was needed for each task.

The daily refusal rate for interviews on the 7th floor ranged between 5 and 9 percent, averaging 8 percent; the average refusal rate in March was 9 percent. On the 11th floor, the refusal rate was much higher, almost 21 percent. This was because of the interviewing schedule and low traffic rate; many of the same visitors were approached again and again for interviews which they became reluctant to grant. Interviews attempted amounted to 59 percent of total visitor traffic; interviews completed amounted to 47 percent of total visitor traffic.

The form used in conducting and recording interviews (Figure 1) was a modified version of the form used in the March survey. The questions about previous visits to NYSL were expanded to yield information on the most recent earlier visiting day and to yield

better information about previous visits to NYSL on the interview day. To help with analysis of total NYSL visitor traffic, visitors leaving the 7th floor were asked whether they had been to the 11th floor and vice versa. To save space, the question about multiple interviews was deleted from the form. The list of possibilities that interviewers could use for prompting in the question on the reasons for visiting NYSL was revised slightly, to reflect responses in the March survey and to better reflect some of the particular concerns of NYSL. Specifically, service for the blind was made easier to distinguish; visitors were no longer expected to distinguish between visits for topical research and for a review of holdings by a particular author; the possibility of visiting NYSL for consultation with a librarian was made explicit. Finally a new question was added to the form to ascertain whether the visitor had been able to accomplish his/her objective.

FIGURE 1.

NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY USER EXIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Nom. time:__:___ am pm. Day: M Tu W Th F . Date:__/__/8__. Fl: 7 11
Start time:__:___. Interviewer:_____. ___Refused;reason_____

Pardon me, I'm working with the Library to conduct a survey of how the Library is used. May I have just a minute or two of your time to ask a few questions?

1. Are you a member of the Library staff?
   ___No ___Yes; end of interview; "Thank you."
2. Is today the first time you have visited the N.Y. State Library?
   ___No ___Yes; go to Question 5.
3. When was the last time you were here before today?_____
4. In the last 12 months, on about how many days would you estimate you were here? _____
5. Were you in and out of the Library earlier today?
   ___No ___Yes: How many times?_____ First time in today_____.
6. What time did you enter the Library (this last time)?_____.
7. What floors of the Library were you on today?_____.
   Were you on (11th, or 7th) during this last visit?___No ___Yes.
8. Why did you come to the Library (this last visit) today?
   (Mark _x_ Main reason, and _x_ Additional reasons)

   *___To look at some book or publication that you knew about before
   *___To borrow some book or publication: ___for the blind
   ___To return some book or publication ___for the blind
   *___To look for material on some topic; do research:
   *___Genealogy Other, if offered_____
   *___To verify a reference; bibliographic information
   *___**To get a librarian's assistance in locating information on a specific topic**
   ___Read my own material ___Relax ___On a break from job
   ___Sightseeing; looking around
   ___Social call; meeting someone here: ___Selling
   *___To photocopy something; ___To pick up photocopying
   *___To use special equipment: ___for the blind
   *___To use database service
   ___To attend a meeting
   ___Courier; messenger
   *___Other_____

9. Were you able to do (*) what you came for?____ **Did you need the help of a librarian or staff member?**_____
10. Was your visit here connected with:
    ___N.Y. State govt activity ___School work
    ___Other govt activity ___Personal research
    ___Work related (non-govt) ___Other
11. Are you:
    ___With N.Y. State Legislature: ___member ___staff
    ___With other government agency--state, local, Federal?
    Agency and location:_____
    ___A student; school and location:_____
    ___In private employment in Albany area
    ___None of above; residing in_____
12. "Thank you very much." Ending time:___:___.
    Remarks; unsolicited comments:_____

TABLE 1
ADJUSTED TRAFFIC COUNTS - 7TH FLOOR -
FOR DAY AND FOR WEEK

Interval Ending	Adjusted Traffic Counts							Percentage of Av. Daily Total			
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Total	Av.	15-min	½-hr	Hour	Cum
9:15	3.94	0	0	0	1.	4.94	0.988	0.297			
9:30	1.98	2.93	2.78	2.78	2.	12.47	2.494	0.749	1.046		
9:45	0.98	1.96	1.89	1.89	3.	9.72	1.944	0.584			
10	3.94	4.84	7.34	8.13	3.	27.25	5.45	1.64	2.224	3.27	
10:15	5.90	3.88	8.12	2.78	5.	25.68	5.136	1.54			
10:30	5.90	9.65	4.60	1.89	6.	28.04	5.608	1.68	3.22		
10:45	7.86	2.93	4.60	1.89	14.	31.28	6.256	1.88			
11	4.92	3.88	3.67	15.26	8.	35.73	7.146	2.15	4.03	7.25	10.52
11:15	4.92	6.79	7.23	6.35	11.	36.29	7.258	2.18			
11:30	7.89	6.84	8.23	1.89	11.	35.82	7.164	2.15	4.33		
11:45	11.77	21.28	10.79	8.13	15.	66.97	13.394	4.09			
12	8.84	13.50	8.12	9.91	9.	49.37	9.874	2.97	7.06	11.39	21.91
12:15	4.94	17.38	7.34	11.02	15.	55.68	11.136	3.35			
12:30	7.88	11.61	15.35	13.69	11.	59.53	11.906	3.58	6.93		
12:45	13.75	14.50	18.13	23.39	11.	80.77	16.154	4.85			
1	18.67	9.69	12.68	14.47	17.	72.51	14.502	4.36	9.21	16.14	38.05
1:15	12.77	10.65	20.69	17.15	8.	69.26	13.852	4.16			
1:30	15.71	13.54	10.90	11.80	12.	63.95	12.790	3.84	8.00		
1:45	13.75	16.50	12.79	16.26	8.	67.30	13.460	4.04			
2	12.77	13.58	10.01	10.02	14.	60.38	12.076	3.63	7.67	15.67	53.72
2:15	19.63	11.61	11.79	7.35	15.	65.38	13.076	3.93			
2:30	9.86	13.54	10.90	4.67	12.	50.97	10.194	3.06	6.99		
2:45	12.77	16.46	8.23	9.13	9.	55.59	11.118	3.34			
3	12.77	8.73	15.46	10.91	12.	59.87	11.974	3.60	6.94	13.93	67.65
3:15	8.86	14.50	18.02	11.80	20.	73.18	14.636	4.40			
3:30	6.90	9.69	10.90	11.02	12.	50.51	10.102	3.03	7.43		
3:45	11.79	14.50	9.90	10.13	9.	55.32	11.064	3.32			
4	10.81	6.81	11.79	14.58	11.	54.99	10.998	3.30	6.62	14.05	18.70
4:15	15.73	9.69	11.79	13.69	15.	65.90	13.18	3.96			
4:30	10.81	6.81	12.79	7.46	16.	53.87	10.774	3.23	7.19		
4:45	15.75	16.46	13.68	13.69	11.	70.58	14.116	4.24			
5	14.75	36.65	19.91	19.04	25.	115.35	23.07	6.93	11.17	18.36	100.06
	319.5	351.3	330.4	312.3	351.	1664.5	332.9				
% of av.	96.0	105.5	99.2	93.8	105.4						

15 min av.= 10.40
½ hr av. = 20.81
1 hr av. = 41.61

TABLE 2
INTERVIEWS RECORDED, WEIGHTING FACTORS - 7TH FLOOR

Interval Ending	Usable Interviews Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Total	Av	% of Total	Hour %	Weight Factor	Traffic %
9:15	1	0	0	0	1	2	0.4	0.733			
9:30	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83			
9:45	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83			
10	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83	6.23	0.525	3.27
10:15	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83			
10:30	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1.83			
10:45	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83			
11	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83	7.33	0.989	7.25
11:15	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83			
11:30	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83			
11:45	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83			
12	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.	1.83	7.33	1.55	11.39
12:15	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
12:30	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
12:45	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
1	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66	14.65	1.10	16.14
1:15	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
1:30	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
1:45	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
2	2	2	2	2	3	11	2.2	4.03	15.02	1.04	15.67
2:15	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
2:30	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
2:45	2	3	2	2	2	11	2.2	4.03			
3	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66	15.02	0.927	13.93
3:15	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
3:30	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66			
3:45	2	2	2	3	2	11	2.2	4.03			
4	2	2	2	2	2	10	2.	3.66	15.02	0.935	14.05
4:15	3	2	2	2	2	11	2.2	4.03			
4:30	2	2	3	3	2	12	2.4	4.40			
4:45	3	3	3	3	3	15	3.	5.49			
5	3	3	3	3	3	15	3.	5.49	19.41	0.946	18.36
	55	54	54	55	55	273	54.6	99.95	100.01		
					Av.=	8.53	1.71				

FIGURE 2.
PROFILE OF DAILY EXIT TRAFFIC

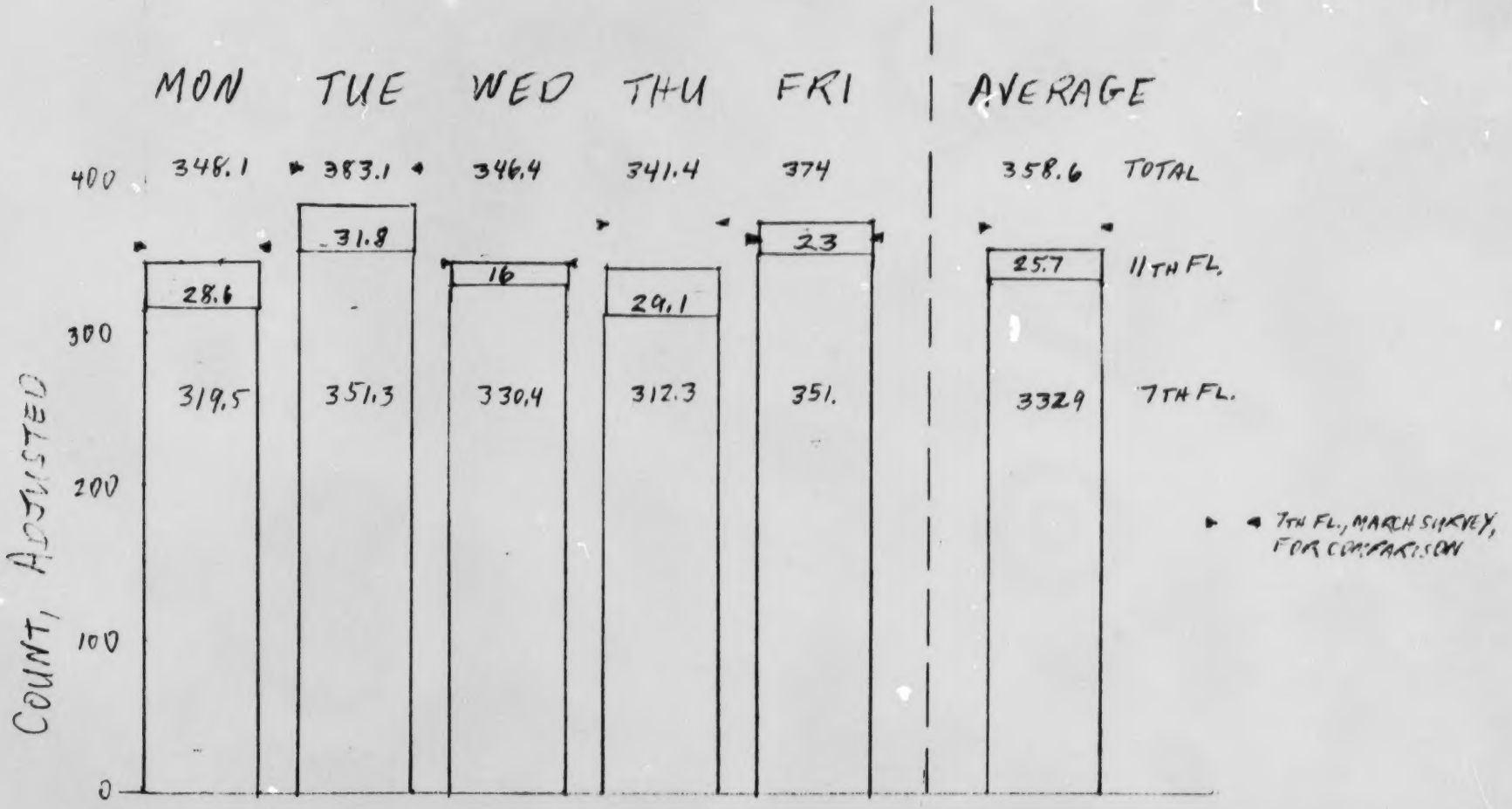


FIGURE 3.

7TH FLOOR EXIT TRAFFIC, 15-MINUTE INTERVALS

1-WEEK AVERAGE COUNTS AND RANGES

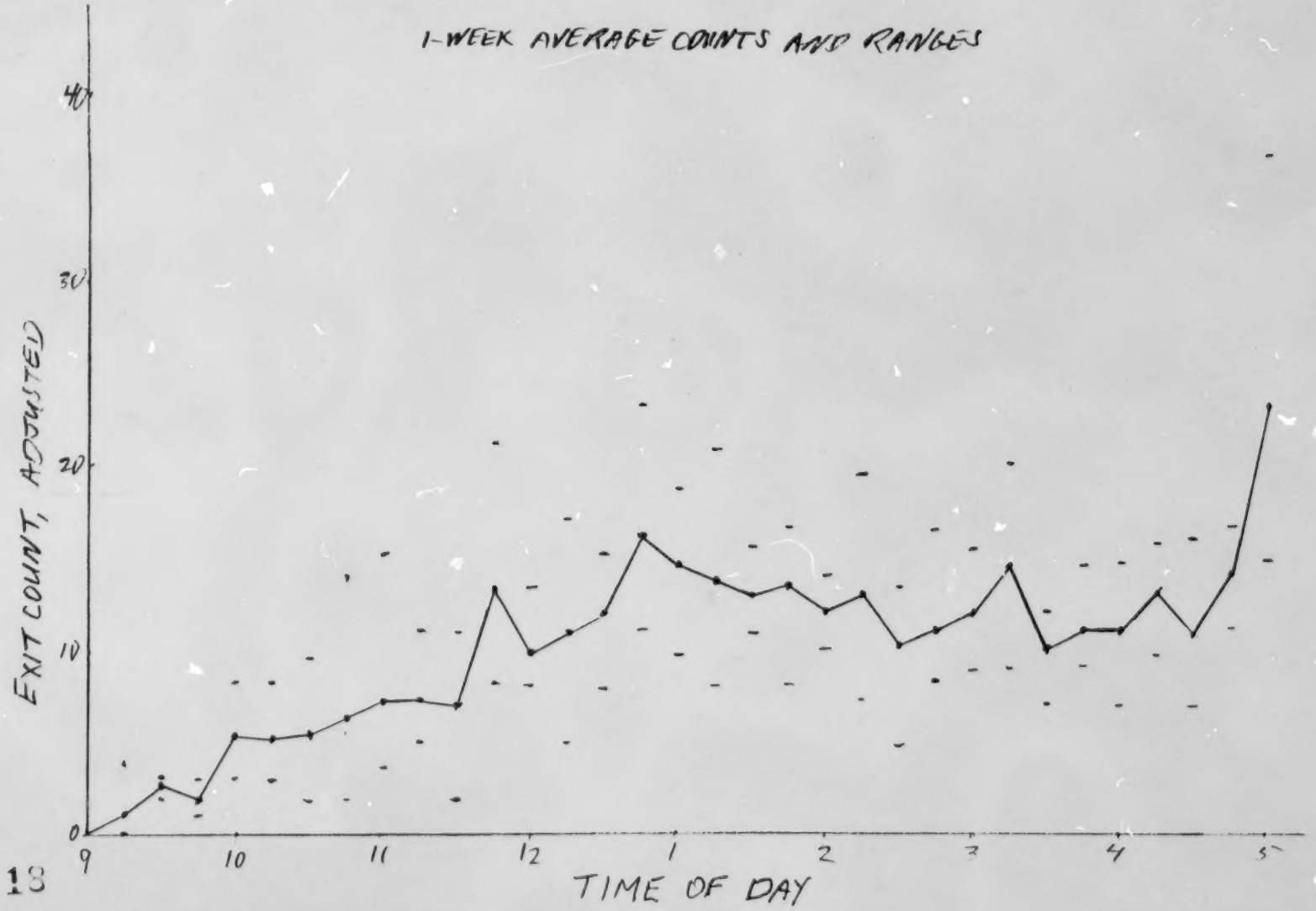
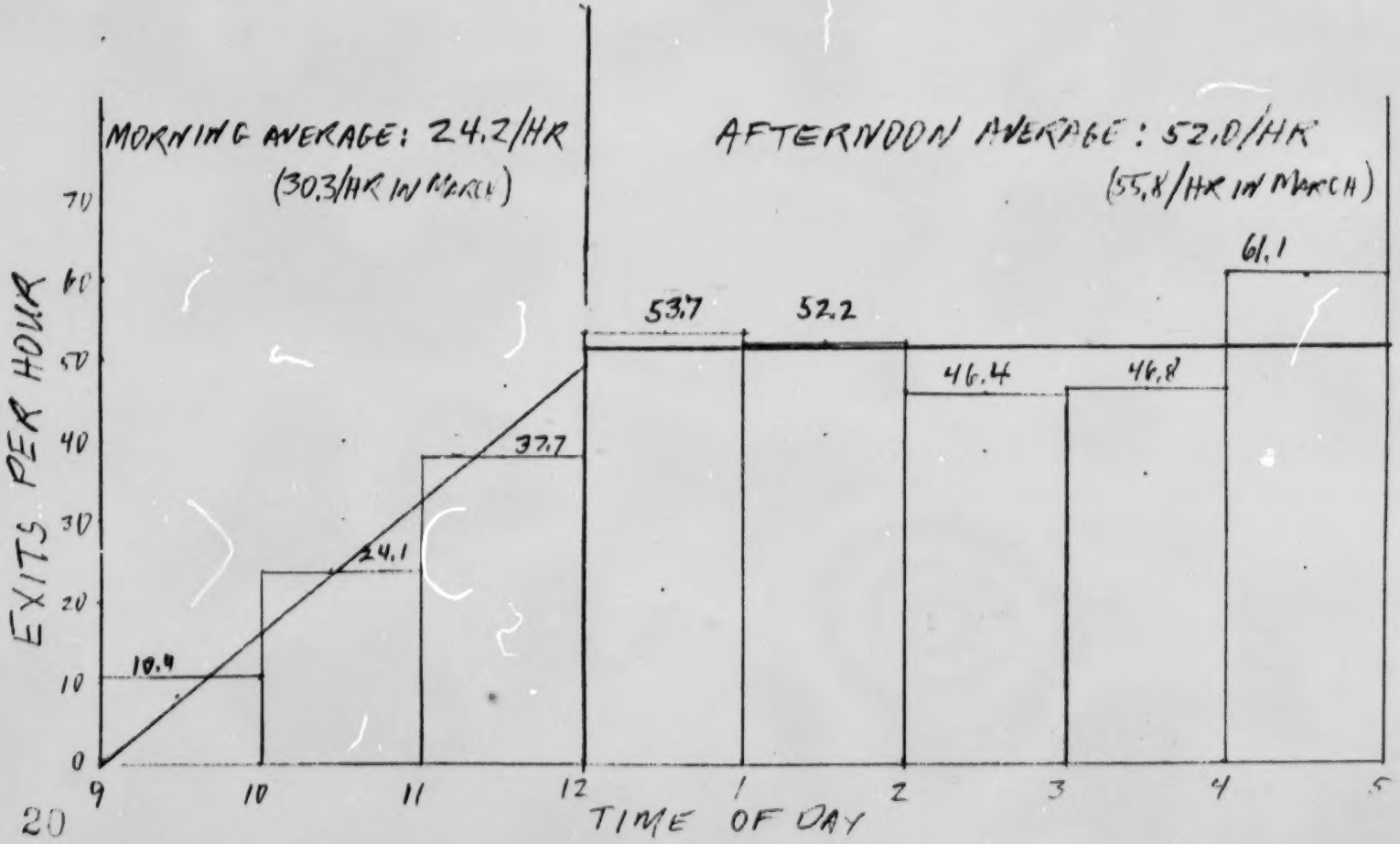


FIGURE 4.

SIMPLIFIED MODELS OF EXIT TRAFFIC

-7TH FLOOR



Main NYSL Area (7th Floor) Survey Results

Visitor Traffic Rates, Patterns, Projections

The adjusted exit traffic count for each 15-minute interval of each test day is given in Table 1, together with figures for daily totals and weekly totals and averages; the weekly averages are shown also as percentages of average daily exit traffic for 15-minute, 30-minute and 1-hour intervals throughout the average day. Visits to NYSL during the survey week totaled almost 1,665, and averaged 332.9 per day. Table 2 given similar information on interviews that were obtained during the survey week; altogether, 273 usable interviews were obtained, averaging 54.6 per day. The percent of the average daily total of interviews that came from each 1-hour interval is given, together with the weighting factor to be applied to interview results from that hourly interview to make the resulting interval percent for interviews identical with the interval percent for measured exit traffic.

The profile of 7th-floor exit traffic by day of week is presented in Figure 2 (together with profiles from the 11th floor and from the March survey that are discussed in succeeding sections of this report). The profile shows Tuesday traffic to be the greatest, by a small edge over Friday's traffic; Thursday's traffic was the lightest.

The profile of 7th-floor exit traffic for each 15-minute period in the average day is traced in Figure 3. Plotted above and below the average trace are the highest and lowest counts observed for each time interval during the test week. Although there is a substantial range for almost every time interval, there is also a rather clear pattern of variation throughout the day: Exit traffic rises slowly from opening time until about noon. It peaks in midday but remains more or less steady throughout the afternoon at a rate higher than the morning rate. There is another, greater peak at closing time. This is the same pattern that was found in the March survey. Figure 4 gives a simplified characterization of the observed pattern. The day is divided into a 9-to-12 morning period in which exit traffic grows at a linear rate, and an afternoon 12-to-5 period in which it remains at a constant rate. Assuming this model, the average morning exit traffic rate is 24.2 per hour and the average afternoon exit traffic rate is 52 per hour. Actual hourly rates are plotted for com-

parison with the model. Average figures are given also for this model as applied to data from the March survey (from Figure 3 in Report No. 1).

The duration of visits to NYSL were determined from the difference between the interviewee's estimate of arrival time and the interviewer's notation of time of starting the interview. Adjusted statistics on frequencies of visits of different durations — from under 5 minutes to over 7 hours — are tabulated in Table 3. A profile of percent of total visits falling into each duration range is plotted in Figure 5. This figure is a bit difficult to interpret because the duration ranges plotted are of four different sizes; they very from 5 minutes to one hour. Figure 6 shows the cumulative percentage of visits as the length of visits included increases. It shows a rather smooth exponential saturation curve. Some 36.3 percent of all visits take less than one-half hour; more than 90 percent of all visits (92.9%) take less than three hours.

Table 4 gives adjusted statistics on inflow and outflow of visitors by half-hour of the day. Inflow data were derived from interviewee responses, and outflow data from actual exit traffic counts. Statistics are given both as visitor counts and as percentages of the average daily total number of visits. Net changes from interval to interval are tabulated, as well as the indicated net visitor occupancy at the end of each interval.

Figure 7 shows the profiles of inflow and outflow traffic throughout the day. These proviles are like mirror images of each other: Inflow starts rapidly in the morning, stays relatively constant through most of the day, then decays steadily from mid-afternoon to closing time. Outflow rises slowly through much of the morning, stays relatively constant throughout most of the day, then rises rapidly near closing time.

Occupancy of NYSL's main facility by visitors throughout the day is shown in Figure 8 (with data from the March survey for comparison). Occupancy is consistently above the daily average, and quite steady, from 11 to 4; it is below normal at the beginning and end of the day. Average occupancy is 14.2 percent of the average daily total number of visits; peak occupancy is 19.1 percent.

TABLE 3

DURATION OF VISITS
7TH FLOOR

VISIT DURATION OVER	UNDER	PERCENT OF VISITS	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
0 min.	5 min	8.1	8.1
5 min.	10 min.	6.1	14.2
10 min.	20 min.	13.9	28.0
20 min.	30 min.	8.3	36.3
30 min.	1 hr.	23.2	59.5
1 hr.	1½ hr.	13.8	73.3
1½ hr.	2 hr.	8.2	81.5
2 hr.	2½ hr.	5.6	87.1
2½ hr	3 hr.	5.8	92.9
3 hr.	4 hr.	3.6	96.5
4 hr.	5 hr.	0.7	91.2
5 hr.	6 hr.	1.1	98.3
6 hr.	7 hr.	1.1	99.4
7 hr.	8 hr.	0.7	100.0

MEDIAN DURATION: 47.7 MIN.
AVERAGE DURATION: 71.9 MIN

FIGURE 5.

FREQUENCY OF VISITS BY VISIT DURATION

7TH FLOOR

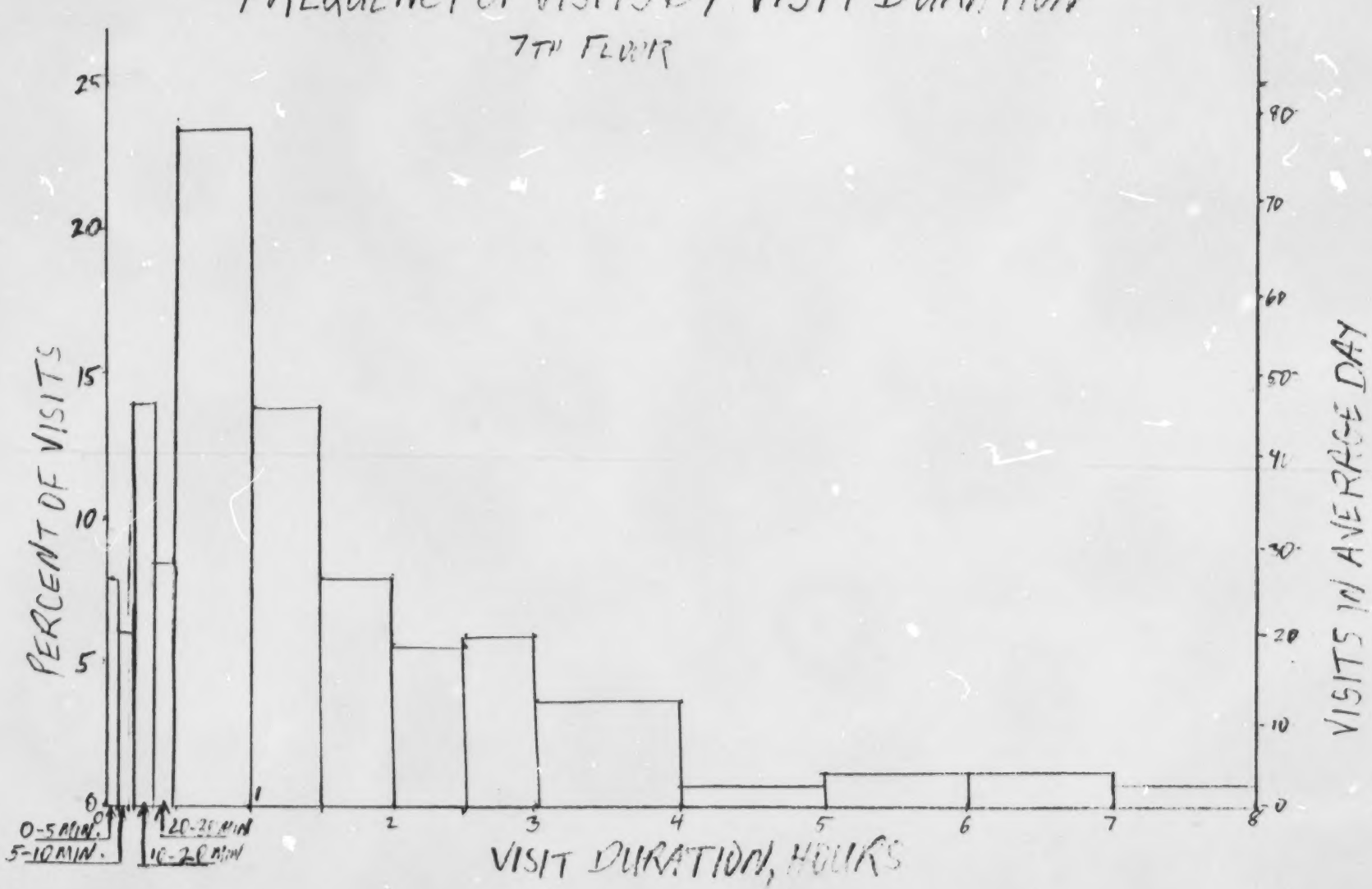


FIGURE 6.

CUMULATIVE PERCENT OF VISITS BY MAXIMUM DURATION

7TH FLOCK

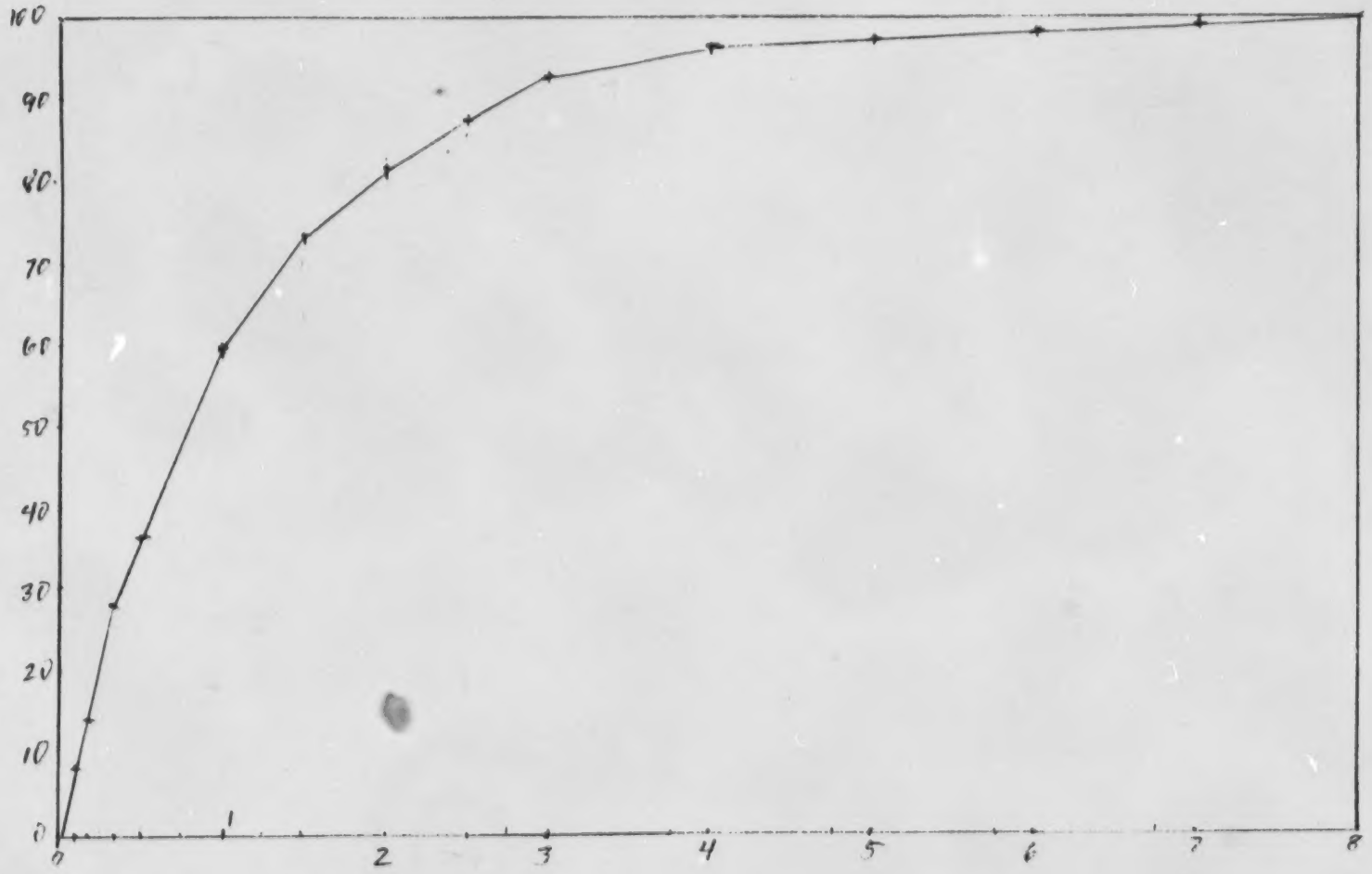


TABLE 4

AVERAGE TRAFFIC INFLOW, OUTFLOW, OCCUPANCY
BY HALF-HOURLY INTERVAL
-- 7TH FLOOR

Interval	Entering		Exiting		Net Change		Occupancy	
	%	Count	%	Count	%*	Count	%*	Count
9 - 9^{30}	6.2	20.7	1.0	3.5	+5.2	+17.2	5.2	17.2
9^{30} - 10	4.6	15.4	2.2	7.4	+2.4	+8.0	7.6	25.2
10 - 10^{30}	7.9	26.2	3.2	10.7	+4.7	+15.5	12.2	40.7
10^{30} - 11	8.7	28.8	4.0	13.4	+4.6	+15.4	16.9	56.1
11 - 11^{30}	6.0	20.1	4.3	14.4	+1.7	+5.7	18.6	61.8
11^{30} - 12	7.6	25.4	7.1	23.5	+0.6	+1.9	19.1	63.7
12 - 12^{30}	6.9	23.1	6.9	23.1	—	—	19.1	63.7
12^{30} - 1	5.3	17.5	9.2	30.7	-4.0	-13.2	15.2	50.5
1 - 1^{30}	9.8	32.5	8.0	26.6	+1.8	+5.9	16.9	56.4
1^{30} - 2	8.9	29.6	7.7	25.5	+1.2	+4.1	18.2	60.5
2 - 2^{30}	6.7	22.3	7.0	23.3	-0.3	-1.0	17.9	59.5
2^{30} - 3	7.6	25.2	6.9	23.1	+0.6	+2.1	18.5	61.6
3 - 3^{30}	5.2	17.3	7.4	24.7	-2.2	-7.4	16.3	54.2
3^{30} - 4	5.4	17.9	6.6	22.0	-1.2	-4.1	15.0	50.1
4 - 4^{30}	2.5	8.4	7.2	23.9	-4.7	-15.5	10.4	34.6
4^{30} - 5	0.7	2.4	11.2	37.2	10.5	-34.8	0	0
	100	332.8	100	333		Av. = 14.2	47.2	Av.

*Percentage of total number of visits in average day (332.9).

FIGURE 7.

TRAFFIC INFLOW, OUTFLOW, BY HALF HOUR

7TH FLOOR

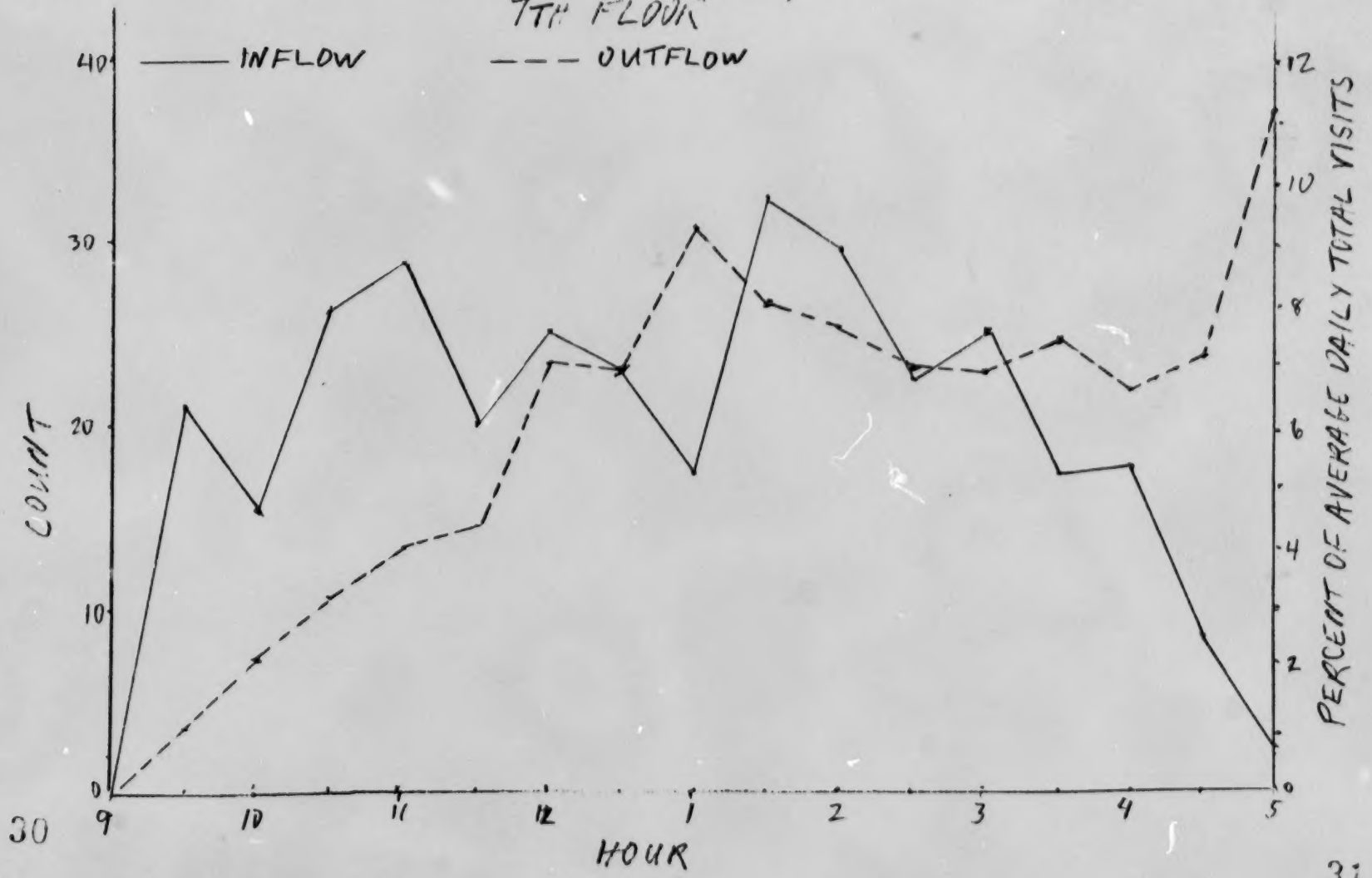
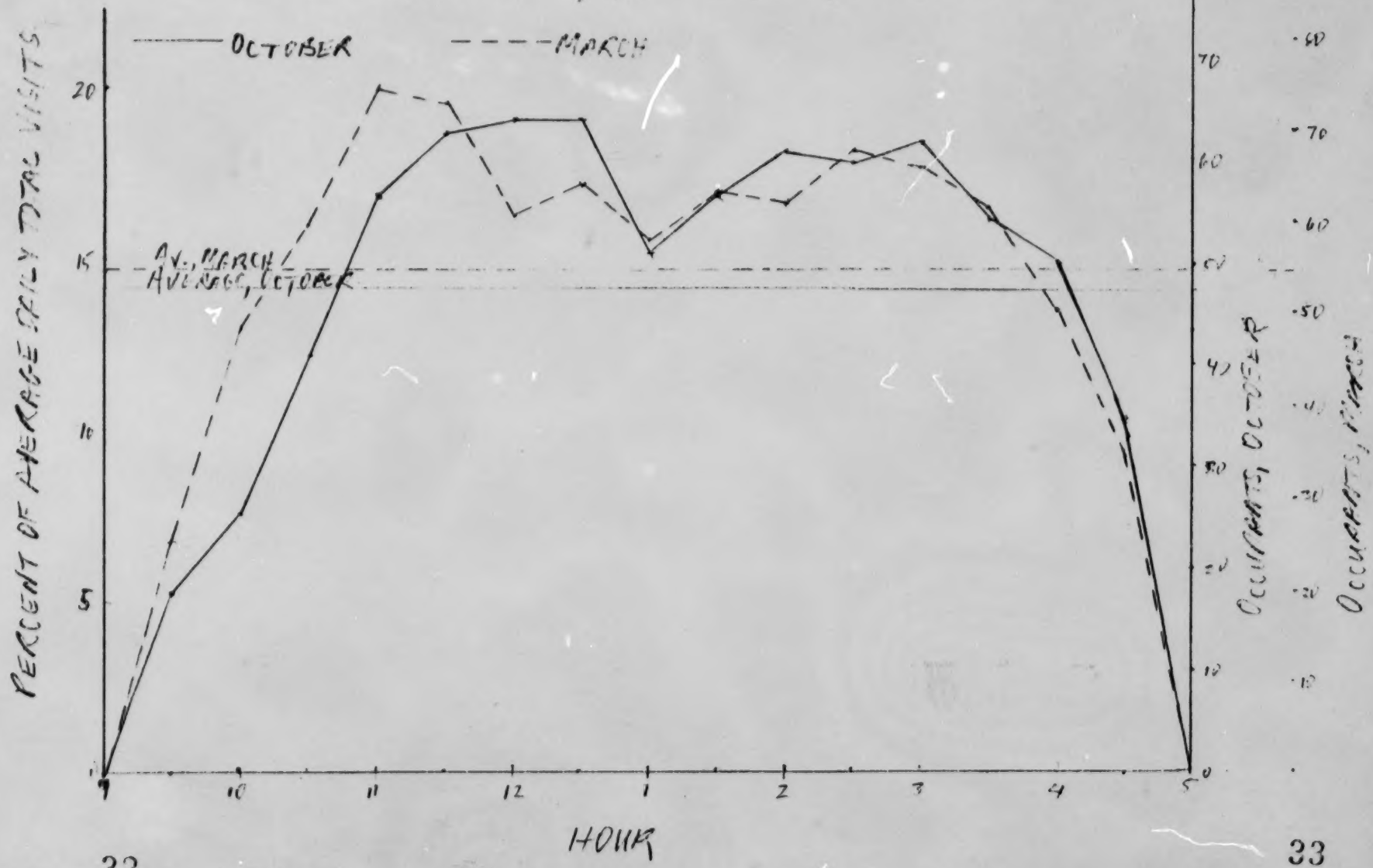


FIGURE 8.

VISITORS IN NYSL, HALF-HOURLY — 7TH FLOOR



The average number of visits per day was determined to be 332.9. Because some persons make two or more visits on a single day, the average number of different visitors per day is lower. By calculation from multiple same-day visits reported by interviewees, the average number of different visitors per day was determined to be 281.

The frequency with which visitors return to NYSL in a year's time is tabulated in Table 5. Some 19 percent of the visitors in the average day had not been to NYSL during the previous twelve months. Smaller proportions of visitors indicated frequent use of NYSL; a very few indicated almost daily use. Findings from the March survey are tabulated for comparison.

Using these data on frequency of repeat visits, projections were calculated for the total number of visits and the total number of different visitor to NYSL in periods of 1 week, 1 month, and 1 year. The calculated projections are given in Table 6. The total number of visits to be expected in 1 year, for example, is the average daily number of visits (333) multiplied by the number of open days (253), which comes to 84,200. Because of repeat visits by certain visitors, the number of different visitors to be expected in 1 year is much lower, about 20,700. Projections from the March survey are given for comparison. Because the projections of the number of different visitors are based on interviewees' estimates, rather than direct counting, it is possible that there may have been a systematic bias toward estimating too high or too low. It should be noted that if interviewees overestimated the number of their visits to NYSL, the actual number of different visitors to NYSL in 1 year would have to be greater than 20,700; if they underestimated, the actual number of different visitors would have to be less than 20,700.

Visitor Interests, Affiliations, Success

The reasons given for visiting NYSL are listed and ranked in Table 7 (with comparative data from the March survey). The leading reason for visiting (45.8%) was to look up material on some topic of interest. This includes both subject and author searches; it excludes genealogy research, which is listed separately. The intent to look at a particular publication (known

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY OF PREVIOUS VISITS

7TH FLOOR

Estimated Days of Previous Visits During Last 12 Months	October 1981		March 1981	
	Different Visitors	Percent of Daily Visitors	Different Visitors	Percent of Daily Visitors
0	53	19.0	50	16.1
1	13	4.6	14	4.3
2	20	7.1	17	5.3
3	10	3.5	13	4.1
4-5	22	7.7	26	8.2
6-10	45	16.2	27	8.3
11-20	44	15.7	45	14.5
21-50	44	15.5	62	19.9
51-100	14	5.7	27	8.6
101-150	8	2.8	12	4.2
151-200	2	0.7	8	2.5
201-253	6	2.2	12	3.9
	281	100	313	100

TABLE 6

PROJECTIONS OF VISITS AND VISITORS

7TH FLOOR

Period Projected	October 1981 Total Visits	October 1981 Different Visitors	March 1981 Total Visits	March 1981 Different Visitors
One Day	333	281	370	313
One Week (5 days)	1,670	1,217	1,850	1,270
One Month (21 days)	7,000	3,870	7,770	3,790
One Year (253 days)	84,200	20,700	93,600	19,800

TABLE 7

MAIN PURPOSE FOR VISIT -- 7TH FLOOR

Purpose	Visits			
	Oct. 1981		Mar. 1981	
	Av./Day	%	Av./Day	%
Look for material on a topic (not Genealogy)	152.5	45.8	132.8	35.9
Look at some publication (known item)	57.6	17.3	59.6	16.1
Look for material by known author or source		*	39.6	10.7
Do Genealogy	40.6	12.2	35.1	9.5
Borrow a book or publication	23.0	6.9	20.3	5.5
Borrow a book or publication for the blind	9.0	2.7		**
Photocopy something	10.3	3.1	10.7	2.9
Sightseeing, looking around	9.7	2.9	8.9	2.4
Read own materials, relax	7.3	2.2	11.5	3.1
Pick up photocopied material	5.7	1.7		**
Verify a reference	5.3	1.6	8.9	2.4
Return a borrowed item	2.3	.7	11.8	3.2
Messenger	4.3	1.3		**
Selling	2.0	.6	2.2	.6
Social call	1.3	.4	2.6	.7
Use database service	1.3	.4	1.9	.5
Other	1.0	.3	24.1	6.5
	332.9	100	370	100

*Not separated; grouped with "Look for material on a topic."
**May be included with "Other."

item search) was the second ranking reason (17.3 percent), followed by genealogy (12.2 percent), book borrowing (9.6 percent), and photocopying (3.1 percent).

Information on reported success or failure of visits to NYSL is presented in Table 8. This table also shows the extent of use of librarians' assistance by visitors. In 250 relevant interviews, at least 197 visits were successful — about 79 percent. Half of these visits involved assistance from NYSL librarians. Only 45 visits — about 18 percent —were considered definitely unsuccessful by the visitors; of these, two-thirds had involved librarian assistance. Data in Table 8 are not weighted as in previous tables; however, deviations from weighted values are believed to be small.

Many visitors who had come to NYSL to look for material on some special topic were cooperative in naming their topics. Table 9 lists and ranks the topics that were reported. Law research was the topic reported by fully half of the respondents. Nineteen lesser topics account for the other half. Data in Table 9 are not weighted. It should be noted that no topic was specified in 52 of the 122 relevant interviews.

The work context of visits is shown in Table 10 (adjusted data). Visits in connection with work for New York State government and visits for personal research ranked almost equally, each accounting for a little over 29 percent of all visits. Visits related to non-government work accounted for 15.4 percent. Visits for school work accounted for 14.6 percent. Data from the March survey are shown for comparison.

Table 11 gives data on the employment status of visitors. Close to half were in some type of government employment (8.8 percent with the New York Legislature, 39.9 percent with all other government organizations). Private employment in the local area accounted for 21.4 percent; 14 percent were students. About 15.9 percent were not in government, not students, not employed locally.

The government agencies named as employers of interviewees are tabulated, without adjustment, in Table 12 (with comparable data from the March survey). The heaviest State agency affiliations of NYSL visitors appear to be the Legislature, Health Department, Education Department, and Judicial branch.

Table 13 gives the places of residence reported by visitors who are not in government employment, not students, and not locally employed. Only a small fraction were merely sightseeing. About 60 percent were from the New York Capital Region. Other serious library users came from twelve different states, as distant as Texas, Wisconsin, and Florida.

In the course of the survey a number of unsolicited comments regarding NYSL were made to members of the research team by visitors to the 7th floor. These comments were noted, and are presented in Table 14. They are grouped and ranked by apparent topic of concern. Highly favorable comments far exceeded negative comments. Favorable comments were particularly numerous with regard to NYSL's collection strength, ambiance, and staff helpfulness. Negative comments most often complained of insufficient visiting hours, difficulty of using the xerox facility, and policy on student borrowing.

TABLE 8

INTERVIEWEE REPORTS ON SUCCESS OF VISITS AND
USE OF LIBRARIAN'S ASSISTANCE
7TH FLOOR
(RAW COUNTS FROM INTERVIEWS*)

Purpose	Total No. of Visits	Visit Successful		Unsure of Success		Visit Not Successful		No. Inf. Given
		Libn Help	W/O Help	Libn Help	W/O Help	Libn Help	W/O Help	
Look up some topic	122	49	48			15	7	3
Look at known item	48	15	20			7	4	2
Genealogy	32	13	9		1	6	3	
Borrow book(s)	20	8	10			1	1	
Borrow book(s) for Blind	7	4	2	1				
Photocopying	9	5	3			1		
Pick up photocopying	6	2	4					
Verify a reference	4	2	2					
Use database service	1		1					
Other	1							
	250	98	99	1	1	30	15	6

*Not adjusted for differences in sampling rates for interviews taken at different times of day.

TABLE 9

LIST OF TOPICS STUDIED BY VISITORS INTERVIEWED
-- 7TH FLOOR
(RAW COUNTS FROM INTERVIEWS*)

Topic	Count
Law, Legal Research	36
Business	5
Science	5
Local History	3
History	2
Social Work	2
Directories	2
Economics	2
Photography	2
Architecture	1
Art	1
Census Data	1
Education	1
Humanities	1
Labor	1
Museums	1
Music History	1
Rhetoric	1
Rural Studies	1
Medicine	1
	70

*Unadjusted data from 122 interviews with persons reporting attempted research; 52 did not specify a topic. Genealogy work excluded from this group.

TABLE 10

CONTEXT OF VISITS -- 7TH FLOOR

Context	Visits			
	Oct. 1981		Mar. 1981	
	Av./Day	%	Av./Day	%
NY State Government	97.2	29.2	155.8	42.1
Other Government Activity	18.0	5.4	5.6	1.5
Personal Research	96.9	29.1	94.7	25.6
School Activity	48.6	14.6	55.1	14.9
Work-Related, Non-Government	51.2	15.4	37.4	10.1
Other	21.0	6.3	21.4	5.8
	332.9	100	370	100

TABLE 11

VISITOR EMPLOYMENT STATUS — 7TH FLOOR

Status	Visits			
	Oct. 1981		Mar. 1981	
	Av./Day	%	Av./Day	%
With NY Legislature	23.9	8.8	25.9	7.0
Other Govt. Organization (NYS, US, etc.)	132.9	39.9	169.1	45.7
Private Employment, Capital Area	71.2	21.4	54.0	14.6
Student	46.6	14.0	60.7	16.4
None of Above	52.9	15.9	60.3	16.3
	332.9	100	370	100

TABLE 12

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED
ON 7TH FLOOR

Government Organization	Survey Date: October '81 Raw Count	October '81 Adjusted	March '81 Raw Count
NEW YORK STATE	(120)	(203.5)	(238)
UNSPECIFIED	2	3.4	1
LEGISLATURE	20	33.9	42
JUDICIAL	(15)	(25.4)	(17)
Atty General	4	6.8	6
Courts, Unspecified	—	—	1
Off. of Court Admin.	1	1.7	3
Appellate Court	2	3.4	1
Commission on Corrections	1	1.7	1
Probation	1	1.7	—
Organized Crime Task Force	1	1.7	—
Crime Victims Compens. Bd.	1	1.7	2
Commission on Judicial Conduct	2	3.4	2
Law	2	3.4	1
EDUCATION	(18)	(30.5)	(66)
Unspecified	11	18.7	30
Archives	—	—	16
Museum	4	6.8	9
Science Service	1	1.7	3
Regents	1	1.7	—
SUNYA	1	1.7	1
SUNY Central	—	—	1
Professional Licensing	—	—	2
Higher Educ. Services	—	—	1
NYS School Board	—	—	1
Data Processing	—	—	1
Dep. Comm. Off., Cultural Educ.	—	—	1
HEALTH	(21)	(35.6)	(31)
Unspecified	18	30.5	27
Alcoholism	2	3.4	1
Mental Health	1	1.7	1
Health Planning Commission	—	—	1
Health-Science Mgt.	—	—	1
SOCIAL SERVICES	(8)	(13.6)	(10)
Unspecified	3	5.1	6
Aging	2	3.4	1
Youth	1	1.7	—
Council on Children and Families	2	3.4	2
Welfare Research Institution	—	—	1

Table 12 continued

GENERAL SERVICES	7	11.9	19
GOVERNOR	(3)	(5.1)	(10)
Governor's Commission, Unspec.	1	1.7	1
Off. of Employee Relations	—	—	4
Task Force on Domestic Violence	—	—	2
Commission on Cable TV	—	—	1
Lt. Gov. Office	—	—	1
Counsel	—	—	1
Unspecified	2	3.4	—
INSURANCE	1	1.7	2
BUDGET	—	—	4
AUDIT CONTROL	1	1.7	—
GRANTS ADMIN.	1	1.7	—
LIQUOR AUTHORITY	1	1.7	—
NYS TEACHERS RETIREMENT AGENCY	—	—	1
ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVEL.	5	8.5	7
PARKS AND RECREATION	7	11.9	7
CONSUMER PROTECTION BOARD	1	1.7	2
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION	3	5.1	—
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	1	1.7	5
FISHERIES	1	1.7	—
LABOR DEPT.	1	1.7	—
CIVIL SERVICE	2	3.4	—
TAXATION	—	—	1
EQUALIZATION AND ASSESSMENT	—	—	5
COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL STANDING	1	1.7	—
MOTOR VEHICLES	—	—	2
HISTORICAL SERVICES	—	—	2
STATE HISTORIC SOCIETY	—	—	1
NY NETWORK	—	—	1
LABS AND RESEARCH DIV.	—	—	1

Table 12 continued

FEDERAL	(6)	(10.2)	(1)
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY	1	1.7	1
IRS	3	5.1	—
ARMY	1	1.7	—
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT	1	1.7	—
LOCAL	(5)	(8.5)	(—)
ALBANY SCHOOL SYSTEM	1	1.7	—
ALBANY AREA ENVIRONMENTAL CTR.	1	1.7	—
ALBANY FACILITY PLANNING	1	1.7	—
ALBANY URBAN RENEWAL	1	1.7	—
ALBANY COUNTY COOP EXTENSION	1	1.7	—
LEVEL NOT DETERMINED	(5)	(8.5)	(5)
TOTALS	136	231	244

*Adjusted only for the mismatch in number of interviews taken in each survey, but not adjusted for variations in sampling rates throughout the day. The raw counts are the unadjusted counts from the interviews conducted in each survey.

TABLE 13

PLACES OF RESIDENCE OF UNAFFILIATED VISITORS
(NOT IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE, NOT STUDENTS, NOT EMPLOYED LOCALLY)
7TH FLOOR

Residence	Instances* Total Count	Instances* Sight-Seeing
New York State		
Capital Region:		
Albany	11	2
Latham	2	
Schenectady	6	
Scotia	1	
Troy	2	2
Clifton Park	3	
Cobleskill	2	
Columbia County	2	
Other:		
Syracuse	1	
Other States		
Maryland	2	
Massachusetts	2	
Pennsylvania	2	
Texas	2	
Wisconsin	2	
Florida	1	
Illinois	1	
Maine	1	
Michigan	1	
Missouri	1	
New Hampshire	1	
Virginia	1	
Foreign		
England	1	1
	48	5

*Raw counts from interviews, not adjusted.

TABLE 14

UNSOLICITED COMMENTS BY VISITORS -- 7TH FLOOR

Topics and Comments	Instances
General Assessments	
Library excellent (very nice, very good, wonderful, great place)	4
"Stinks" (disappointed student borrowers)	2
This library merits more State aid	1
Collection	
Holdings are very good (fine, phenomenal, underrated)	2
- especially for legal research	1
- in history	1
- for reference	1
State Government, Legislature would be lost without this library	2
Disappointed that Library lacked (periodical)	1
Access	
Open hours are inadequate (should be open evenings, weekends)	3
Elevators are too slow	1
Forcing students to use ILL for borrowing makes it almost useless because it takes so long	3
Enjoy being able to browse the stacks	1
Service	
Great service; librarian(s) very helpful	4
Need a changemaker near Xerox	4
Reference librarian should not have to answer phone and keep visiting patron waiting interminably	1
Computer catalog disagrees with microfilm catalog regarding holdings	1
Computer catalog instructions are terrible; do not want Library staff to help with catalog search	1
Promotion	
Have been to State Museum many times and did not know of Library in the same building	1

Comparison of First and Second Surveys of Main NYSL Area

A comparison of the results of this second survey of NYSL use with the results of the earlier survey of March 1981 (Report No. 1) yields some interesting differences. It also yields numerous similarities that are at least as interesting as the differences. Findings from a comparison of the two surveys are presented and discussed in this section. The comparison pertains only to visitor use of the main NYSL facility (the area with 7th floor access).

Differences

The most obvious difference between the March and October surveys is in the volume of visitor traffic. The average number of visits per day in October (332.9) was ten percent less than the average number of visits per day in March (370). The difference was not dramatically large, but there is very little chance that it was merely a random accident of sampling. On each day of the week in October, there was less visitor traffic than on the corresponding day in March (Figure 2). There were no weather problems, school vacation periods, holidays, or unusual public events to set one survey period apart from the other. The difference appears to be quite real, even though the reason for it is not self evident.

Further evidence that the decline in visitor traffic in October was probably not a random fluctuation can be found in the data on the context of visits to NYSL (Table 10). If we compare the average numbers of visits in March and October for each context, it is clear that the only context in which there was a major decrease was for visits connected with New York State government activity; the decline here was from 155.8 to 97.2 visits per day. Only one other context, school activity, declined; but there the decline was very small and possibly not even significant. In two contexts, visits actually increased: work-related nongovernment activity and government activity other than New York State. In the contexts of personal research and "other" (which includes sightseeing and relaxing), there was just about no change whatever in visitor traffic. The decline in visits connected with New York State government activity is the outstanding feature of this analysis. The increases in activity for other governments and for nongovernment work and the decline in school activity are of much smaller magnitudes and of much less interest.

One can speculate on whether the decline in New York government related activity is a cyclic phenomenon or a continuing long-range trend. Repeat surveys on anniversary dates of these first two surveys would resolve that question. An annual cyclic pattern is a resonable hypothesis, since there are identifiable annual cycles in the activities carried out by New York government, especially in the Albany region. For example, the New York Legislative meets from January to June, putting the March survey in the middle of the legislative session and the October survey in the middle of the legislative recess. Also, the budgeting process follows an annual cycle that is related to the legislative cycle. By carrying out additional surveys throughout the seasons of the year (presumably over the course of several calendar years) one could establish or refute the idea of regular annual variation in government related use of NYSL. One might well establish similar annual cycles for some of the other contexts of NYSL use. Use by different levels of government (Federal, local) might peak and dip at different times of the year from state government. The existence of annual use cycles in academic libraries is well established (2, 3); one would expect to find a similar pattern of school-related use of NYSL, namely much lower activity in the summer months, a plunge of activity at the start of any recess period, and a surge of activity near the end of a recess period.

A more subtle but still interesting finding from comparing the two surveys is that visits to NYSL by full-time students (Table 11) decreased by a larger amount in October than did visits in context of school activity (Table 10). There is no doubt that a larger fraction of visits by employed persons (government and private employment) were in connection with their continuing education, rather than their work activities, in October than in March. The reason is not clear.

There is information in Table 12 that may help to clarify the reduced level of visits related to New York State government. Examining the State agency affiliations of visitors to NYSL, it is clear that the reduced activity was distributed unevenly among the various governmental units. The Education Department, which had the largest representation in both surveys, showed the greatest decease, from 66 to 30.5 effective interview reports

— a drop of more than 50 percent. Visits by Legislature staff decreased to a much smaller degree, about 20 percent. Other prominent units, such as the Judicial branch and the Health Department showed increases, rather than decreases, in visits. (For units with smaller numbers of visits, the crude method used to adjust data in Table 12 makes comparisons very questionable.) The reason for the singularly large decrease in visits by Education Department personnel is not known; but observation of disparity of changes among different government units may help in future efforts to identify the underlying reasons for these variations in visitor traffic.

The frequency of different reasons for which visitors came to NYSL changed in only some modest respects from March to October (Table 7). There was some decline in the number of visits to conduct subject or author searches. There was more book borrowing and less book returning in October than in March (a normal phenomenon in most academic libraries and probably most other large research libraries). There were apparently more visits for genealogy work and fewer for relaxation and casual reading.

One more difference between the March and October surveys is a slight decrease in the duration of a visit (Table 3 in this report and Report No. 1). The decrease was about 3½ minutes in median length of a visits (from about 51 minutes to under 48 minutes) and a decrease of about 6 minutes in average length of a visit (from about 78 to 72 minutes). This decrease in visit length has the effect of decreasing the effective average visitor occupancy measured as a percentage of total daily visitors (Figure 8). The reason for the decrease in visit duration is not clear, but could well be related to the decrease in visitor traffic. From data already collected it should be possible to determine whether visits in the context of government activity tend to last longer than visits for other purposes. If so, the decline in government-related visits would account for the decrease in visit length in October.

Similarities

Having pointed out all of the foregoing differences between the surveys, it is important to point out that there are striking similarities as well.

The differences that were noted are almost all of relatively small magnitude (e.g., a ten-percent difference in visits per day). Thus, there seems to be an underlying stability in the NYSL visitor pattern, with only minor changes to be expected from time to time. If this is true, it simplifies the job of monitoring NYSL use in the future, since less repeat surveying is needed to track a stable activity than to track a volatile activity.

The similarity of the two surveys is extremely strong with respect to traffic flow characteristics. Although both surveys found rather large fluctuations in the 15-minute traffic counts from day to day in the survey week (Table 1 and Figure 3 in this report, Table 1 and Figure 2 in Report No. 1), both surveys showed very close correspondence in hourly totals as a percentage of daily traffic, particularly when averaged for the week.

This similarity is shown graphically in Figures 9 and 10. Figure 9 shows, for both surveys, the hourly exit traffic as a percent of the daily total traffic. It shows both the average for each survey week and the daily range in that week. The averages for these hourly periods are never as much as 3 percentage points apart in the two surveys; for six of the eight hourly periods they are less than 1 percentage point apart. For every one of the eight hourly periods, the average for one survey week falls well within the range of daily percentages for the other week. In Figure 10, the percentage shown for each hour is the cumulative percentage of daily traffic from the start of the day; here the close correspondence of the two surveys shows up even more strikingly. While it would be foolhardy to draw a conclusion on the basis of only two weeks of sampling, there appears to be a predictable pattern of NYSL visitor traffic throughout the day, especially when averaged over several days at a time.

The apparent regularity of the traffic pattern suggests that one can maintain close surveillance of visitor traffic without having to spend very much time counting traffic. The reasoning is that if traffic during a particular period of the day is consistently a known percentage of total traffic for the day, then one can calculate the full daily traffic from a count of traffic in just that particular period. For example, Figure 9 suggests that the

FIGURE 9.
EXIT TRAFFIC IN ONE HOUR AS PERCENTAGE OF DAILY TOTAL

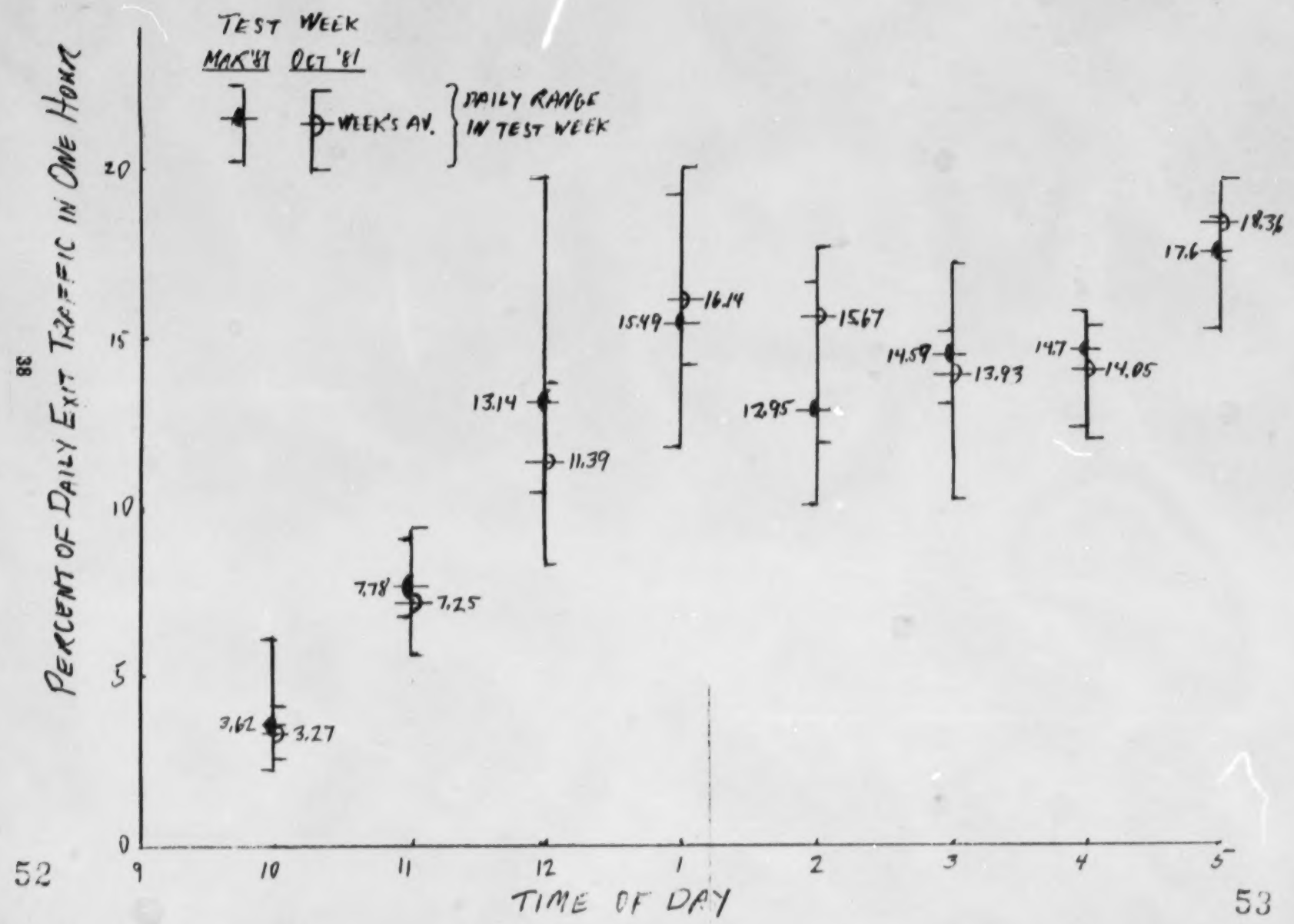
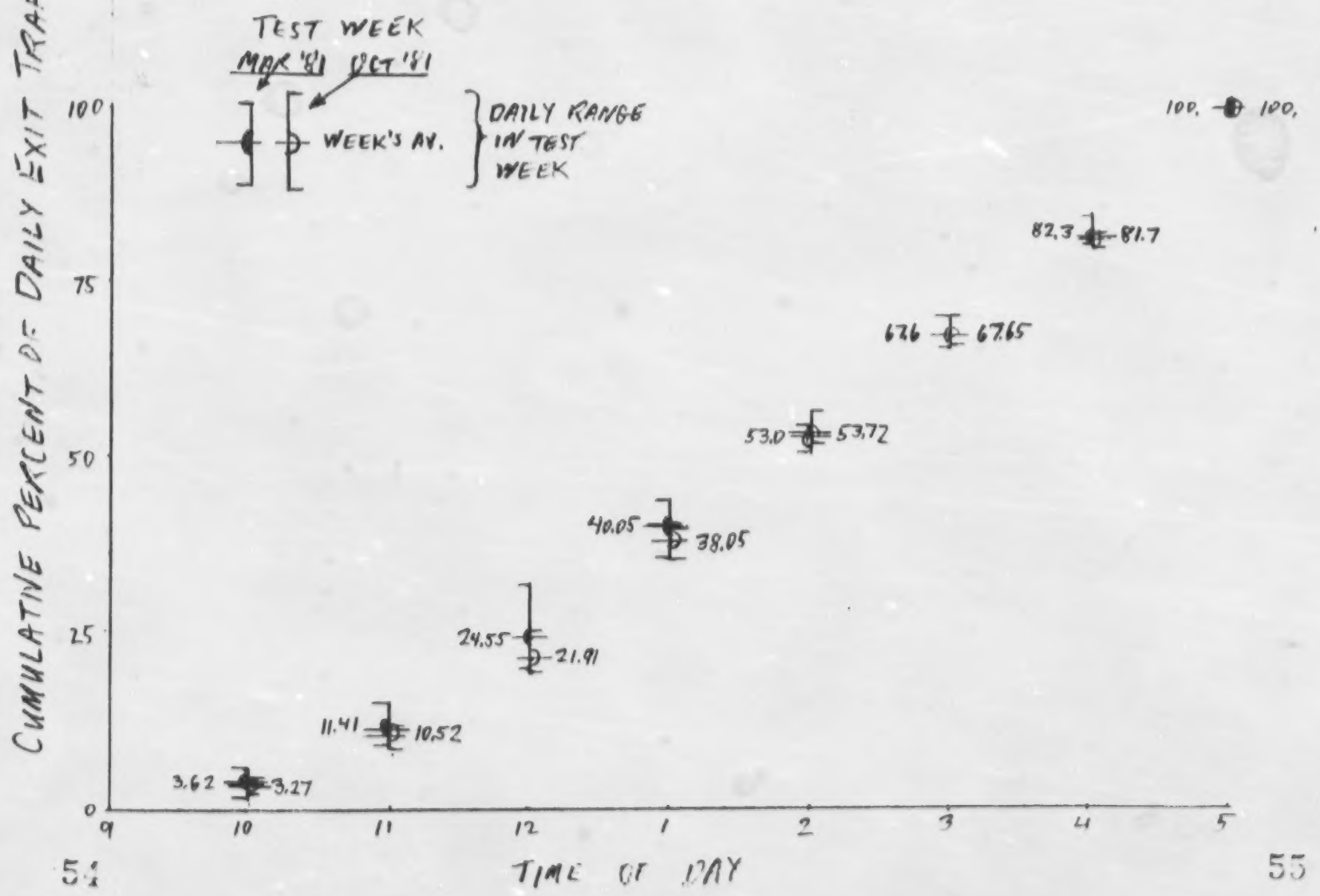


FIGURE 10.

CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE OF DAILY EXIT TRAFFIC BY HOUR OF DAY



visitor exit traffic from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. will average right around 14 to 15 percent of actual daily traffic if measured over several days. Using that as an assumption, if one counted exit traffic from 3 to 4 p.m. each day for a week and it averaged, say, 50 persons, then the average daily traffic would be calculated as 50 divided by 14 to 15 percent, or 333 to 357. This kind of approach might be sufficient for useful continuous monitoring of traffic without undue effort and expense. It would not obviate the need for full-day or full-week traffic observation and interviewing from time to time, but might provide very valuable information about the intervals between major surveys.

Another approach for simplified monitoring is suggested by the apparent regularity of visitor occupancy of NYSL throughout the day (Figure 8). The March and October surveys showed great similarity of occupancy rate expressed as percent of total visits in a day; the similarity is closest in the afternoon hours. It should be possible, therefore, to get a fairly accurate measure of the daily visitor traffic by conducting a single head-count of visitors in NYSL at a particular time. For example, at 1:30 p.m. the number of visitors in the library should be about 17 percent of the daily total of visits, at least if averaged over several days of observation. Thus, counting occupants of NYSL on a regular daily schedule could be considered as a means of "counting" visitor traffic throughout the year. The validity of this approach would, of course, have to be verified by conducting real traffic counts from time to time and comparing them with the occupancy counts.

The reverse of the foregoing shortcut can also be considered. That is, one might count the exit traffic for the first few hours of the day (say, 9 to 11 a.m.), and from that predict the profile of occupancy for the rest of the day with reasonable accuracy.

One more similarity between the March and October surveys should be noted. It is that, despite a ten-percent difference in daily traffic counts, the projected numbers of individuals who visit NYSL in the course of a year were almost identical (Table 6). This was because the second survey had a somewhat larger proportion of visitors who come to NYSL only rarely, causing a larger projection of different visitors over a one-year period that exactly offset the effect of the smaller traffic rate found during the second survey.

This might be sheer coincidence, or might not. It will be interesting to see whether future surveys continue to point to a total clientele of about 20,000 different visitors in a year, regardless of fluctuations in the daily volume of visits.

Survey of 11th Floor

Visitor Traffic Rates, Patterns, Projections

The volume of visitor exit traffic on the 11th floor proved to be less than one-tenth of the 7th floor traffic. With such a small traffic rate, analysis of data by 15-minute intervals (as it was collected) would be very unrealistic; almost often as not, there was simply no traffic to be counted in a 15-minute interval. Therefore, the data were combined into hourly intervals for tabulations and comparisons.

Table 15 gives the adjusted exit traffic count for each hour of each survey day, together with figures for daily totals, weekly totals, and averages; the weekly average for each hourly interval is given also as a percentage of the average total traffic in a day. Total traffic in a week was about 129, or 25.7 visits per day on the average. Table 16 gives similarly arranged data on the interviews that were obtained during the survey week; altogether, 60 usable interviews were obtained, averaging 12 per day. This comes out to a traffic sampling rate of 47 percent. Table 16 also gives the weighting factor to be applied to interview data from each hourly period in order to make the resulting hourly percent identical with the hourly percent of exit traffic.

The profile of 11th-floor exit traffic by day of week is included in Figure 2 (along with the 7th floor profile). The daily 11th floor visit totals ranged between 16 and 32. In terms of percentage variation from the average, the 11th floor daily traffic was obviously far more variable than 7th-floor traffic. This is hardly surprising because of the generally lower traffic on the 11th floor. For example, an occasional NYSL tour group of several visiting librarians would not have much impact on the 7th-floor survey, but would have major impact on the 11th-floor survey there was one tour group observed during the survey week. For what it may be worth, the 11th-floor daily profile agreed with the 7th floor profile in that Tuesday was the busiest day of the week.

The profile of 11th-floor exit traffic for each hour of the average day is traced in Figure 11. The highest and lowest counts observed in the respective hours during the test week are plotted above and below the trace. The trace shows an average exit pattern that

TABLE 15

ADJUSTED TRAFFIC COUNT — 11TH FLOOR
FOR DAY AND FOR WEEK

Hour Ending	Adjusted Traffic Counts							Percent of Av. Daily Total
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Total	Av.	
10	1.79	0	0	2.18	0	3.97	0.79	3.07
11	1.79	12.35	3	2.91	0	20.05	4.01	15.61
12	8.05	1.76	2	9.45	2	23.26	4.65	18.10
1	0.89	6.18	2	0.73	1	10.8	2.16	8.41
2	7.16	0.88	1	6.55	5	20.59	4.12	16.04
3	4.47	5.29	2	3.64	4	19.4	3.88	15.10
4	0.89	2.65	4	1.45	9	17.99	3.6	14.01
5	3.58	2.65	2	2.18	2	12.41	2.48	9.65
	28.6	31.8	16	29.1	23	128.5	25.7	100

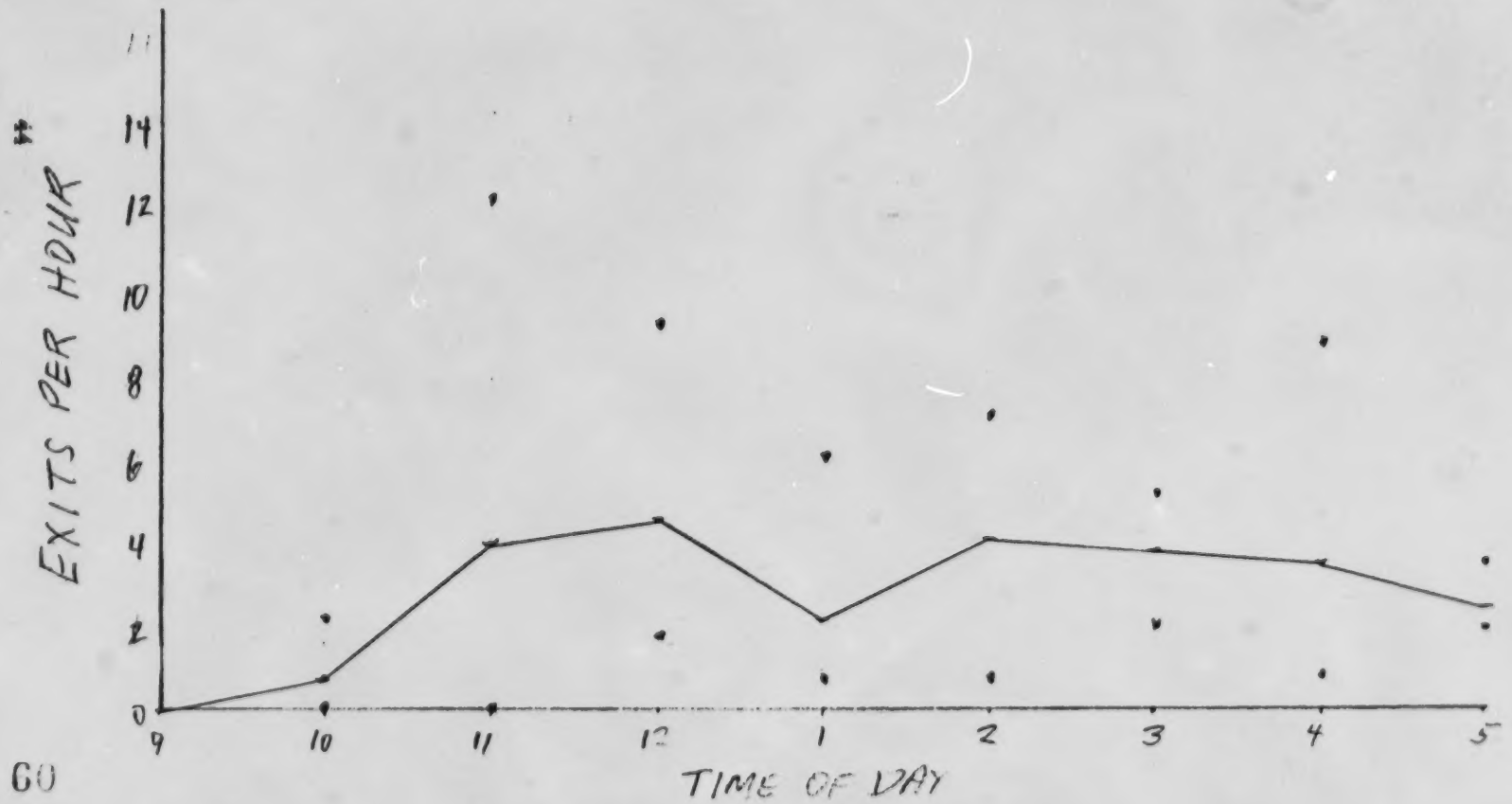
TABLE 16

INTERVIEWS RECORDED, WEIGHTING FACTORS -- 11TH FLOOR

Hour Ending	Usable Interviews							% Of Total	Weight Factor	Traffic %
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Total	Av.			
10	1	0	0	2	0	3	.6	5.0	0.614	3.07
11	0	2	1	1	0	4	.8	6.67	2.34	15.16
12	3	1	1	2	2	9	1.8	15.0	1.21	18.10
1	0	3	1	0	1	5	1.0	8.33	1.01	8.41
2	2	0	1	4	3	10	2.0	16.67	0.962	16.04
3	1	3	1	2	2	9	1.8	15.0	1.01	15.10
4	0	1	3	1	5	10	2.0	16.67	0.840	14.01
5	3	3	1	2	1	10	2.0	16.67	0.579	9.65
	10	13	9	14	14	60	12	100.		100

FIGURE 11.
11TH FLOOR EXIT TRAFFIC, HOURLY INTERVALS

1-WEEK AVERAGE COUNTS AND RANGES



is similar to 7th-floor traffic through much of the day (compare histogram profile in Figure 4); however, 11th-floor traffic appears to decline markedly around 1 p.m., and it does not show the closing-time spurt that is characteristic of 7th-floor traffic. A two-part model of exit traffic appears resonably applicable to the 11th floor, as it is to the 7th floor; the model postulates approximately linear build-up of traffic from opening time until about noon, and more-or-less constant traffic from then until closing time.

The frequencies of different ranges of visit duration and tabulated in Table 17; data for this table were the differences between the starting time of an interview and the interviewee's stated arrival time. The profile of visit durations is plotted in Figure 12. Comparison with the profile for durations of visits to the 7th floor (Figure 5) shows sharp differences, suggesting that there may be a major difference in use patterns for the two areas of NYSL. On the 11th floor, no visits longer than 3 hours were reported and there was a surprisingly high percentage of visits lasing 60 to 90 minutes. The difference in pattern can be seen also in Figure 13, which plots the cumulative percentage of visits up to any duration. This plot is very different from its 7th floor counterpart (Figure 6); it is relatively steeper and more uneven. The differences could be mere accidents of a much smaller sample size for the 11th floor but it seems more likely that they are genuine indicators of different use patterns.

Statistics on the inflow and outflow of visitors to the 11th floor by time of day are given in Table 18; occupancy and its net change from hour to hour are given also. The profiles of traffic inflow and outflow are plotted in Figure 14. The inflow and outflow figures remain very close to each other throughout the day and follow a very marked double-peaked contour. The corresponding graph for 7th floor traffic (Figure 7) appears at first glance to be entirely different, but this is partly because it is plotted for half-hours rather than hours. The actual differences are in the steepness of rise and fall of the inflow and outflow, rather than a double peaked contour. Figure 15 shows the profile of visitor occupancy of the 11th-floor facility. It shows the same basic characteristics as the 7th-floor profile (Figure 8). In both instances, there is a build-up through the morning hours, a fairly steady

TABLE 17

DURATION OF VISITS
11TH FLOOR

Visit Duration Over	Under	Percent of Visits	Cumulative Percent
0 min.	5 min.	7.6	7.6
5 min.	10 min.	11.7	19.3
10 min	20 min.	17.8	37.1
20 min.	30 min.	15.4	52.5
30 min.	1 hour	6.6	59.1
1 hour	1½ hour	20.5	79.6
1½ hour	2 hour	7.5	87.1
2 hour	2½ hour	8.5	95.6
2½ hour	3 hour	4.4	100.0
3 hour	4 hour	—	—
4 hour	5 hour	—	—
5 hour	6 hour	—	—
6 hour	7 hour	—	—
7 hour	8 hour	—	—
		100	100

FIGURE 12.

FREQUENCY OF VISITS BY VISIT DURATION
11TH FLOOR

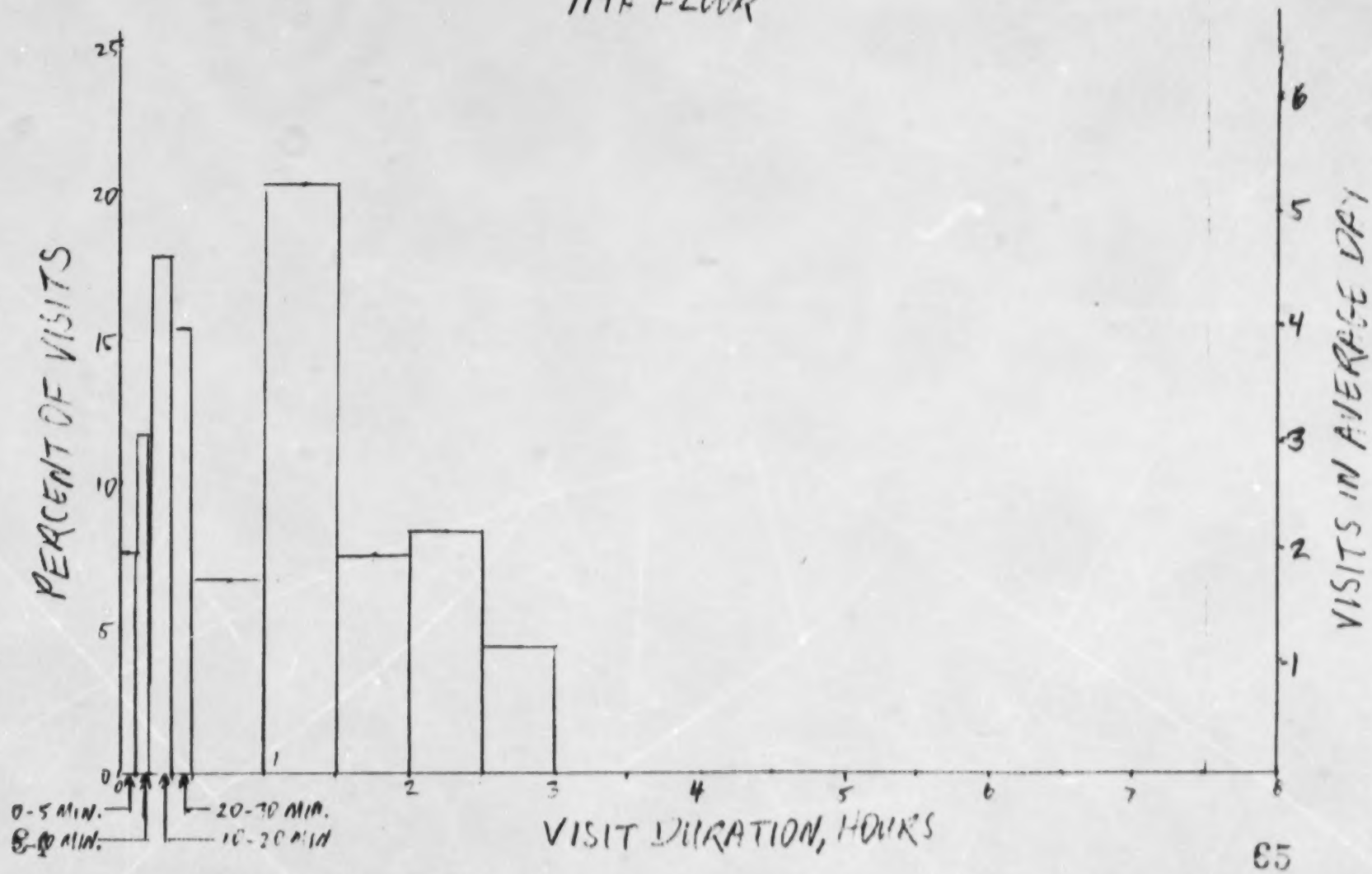


FIGURE 13.

CUMULATIVE PERCENT OF VISITS BY MAXIMUM DURATION

11TH FLOOR

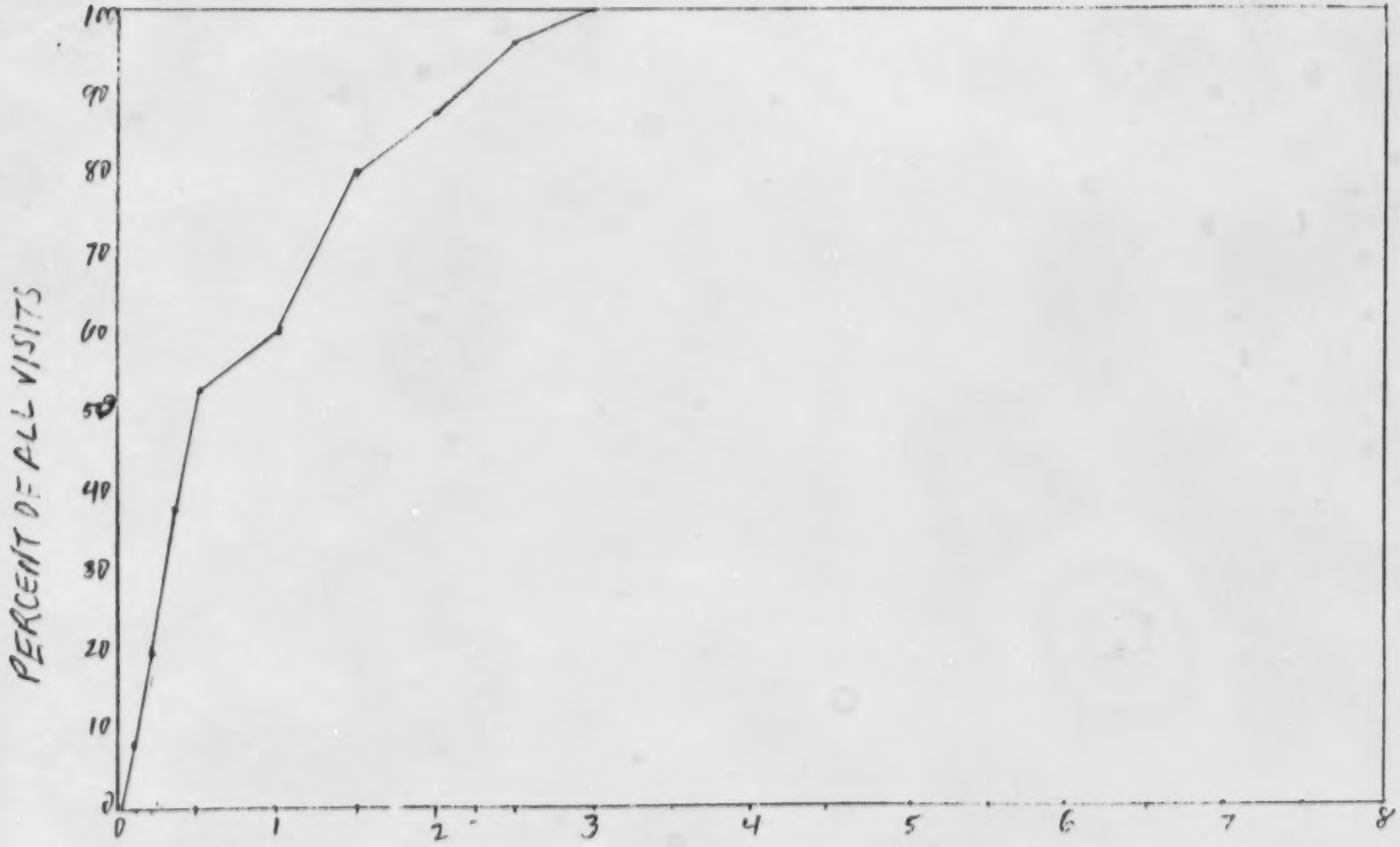


TABLE 18

AVERAGE TRAFFIC INFLOW, OUTFLOW, OCCUPANCY
BY HOURLY INTERVAL
-- 11TH FLOOR

Interval	Entering		Exiting		Net Change		Occupancy	
	%	Count	%	Count	%*	Count	%*	Count
9 - 10	10.9	2.8	3.1	0.8	+7.8	+2.0	7.8	2.0
10 - 11	15.0	3.9	15.6	4.0	-0.4	-0.1	7.4	1.9
11 - 12	22.5	5.8	18.1	4.6	+4.7	+1.2	12.1	3.1
12 - 1	9.9	2.5	8.4	2.2	+1.2	+0.3	13.2	3.4
1 - 2	14.5	3.7	16.0	4.1	-1.6	-0.4	11.7	3.0
2 - 3	15.1	3.9	15.1	3.9	—	—	11.7	3.0
3 - 4	9.2	2.4	14.0	3.6	-4.7	-1.2	7.0	1.8
4 - 5	2.9	0.7	9.7	2.5	-7.0	-1.8	0	0
	100	25.7	100	25.7		Av.=	8.9	2.3

*Percent of total number of visits in average day.

FIGURE 14.

TRAFFIC INFLOW, OUTFLOW, BY HOUR – 11TH FLOOR

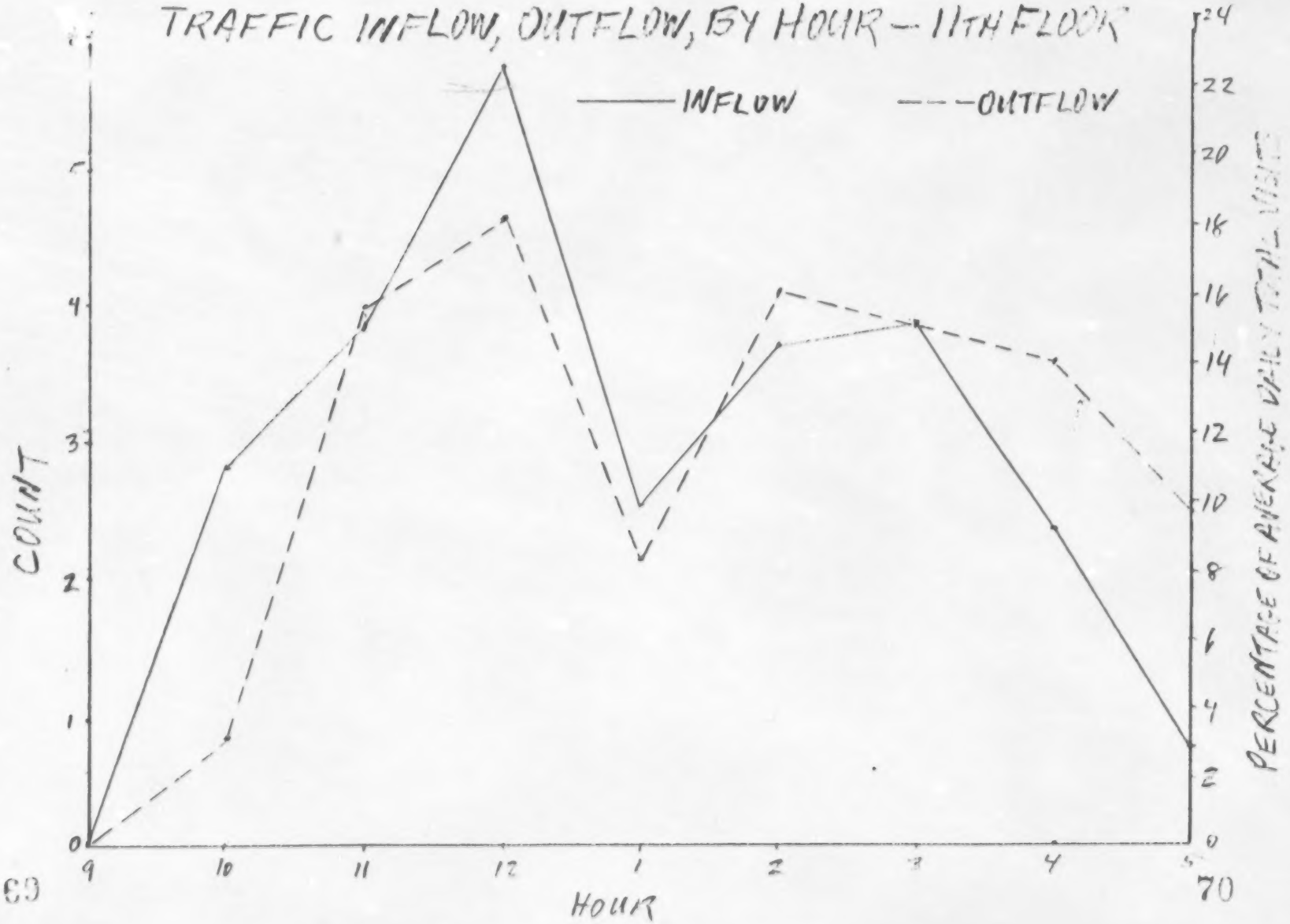
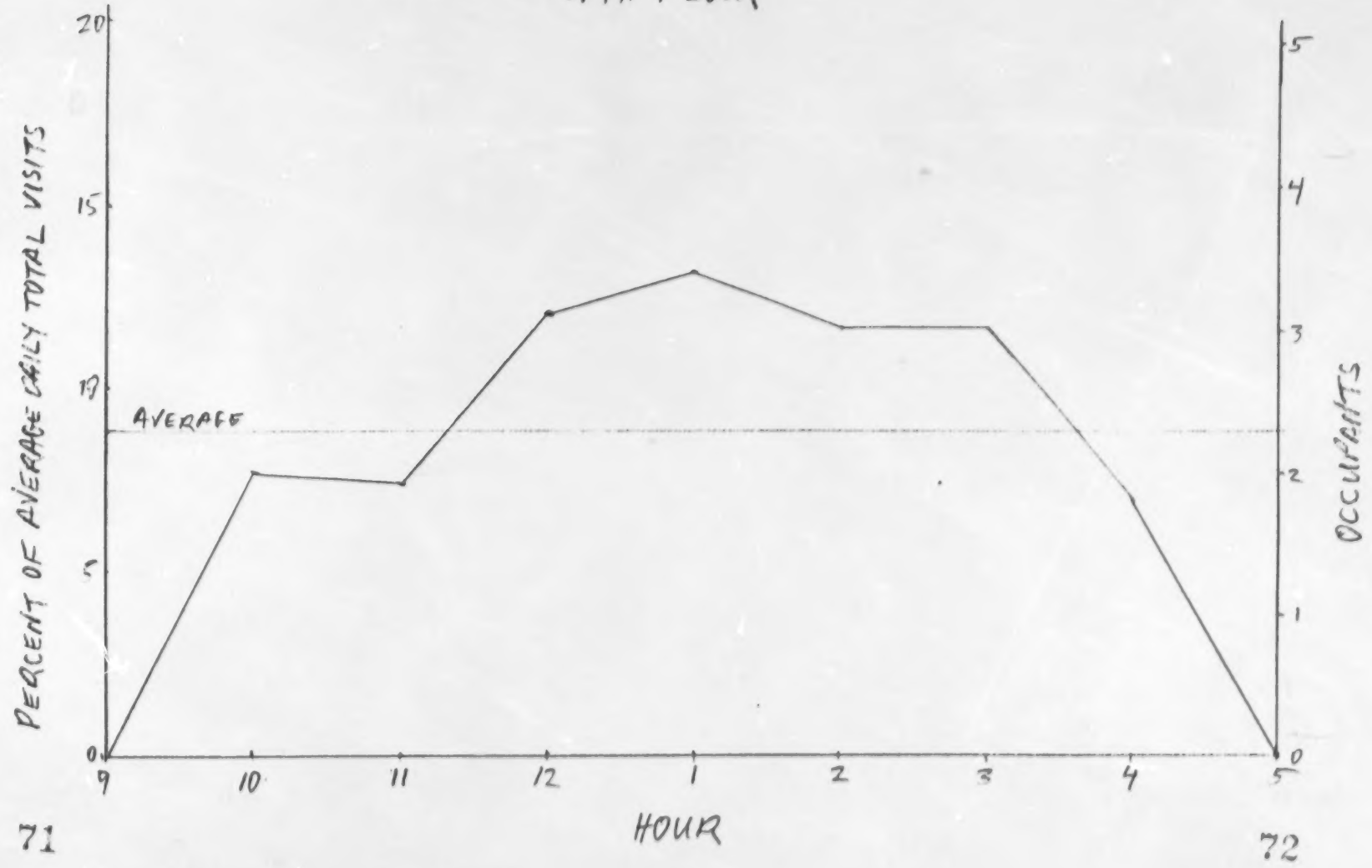


FIGURE 15.

VISITORS IN NYSL, HOURLY

11TH FLOOR



afternoon occupancy, and a rapid decay in late afternoon. A difference, however, is that the average occupancy on the 11th floor was about 9 percent of the daily visitor total, whereas the average occupancy on the 7th floor (for both the first and second surveys) was between 14 and 15 percent. This is a consequence of the relatively shorter durations of visits to the 11th floor. Peak occupancy averaged 13 percent on the 11th floor, but exceeded 19 percent on the 7th floor. Actual visitor numbers are very low; generally, there are only two to four visitors in the 11th floor area. The 7th floor generally has 30 to 70 visitors at any time.

The average number of visitors per day was 25.7. Interviews revealed that some of the visitors made more than one visit in a single day. Calculation from the interview data gives the average number of different visitors per day as about 22.3. Thus, figures for both visits and visitors for the 11th floor are close to 8 percent of the corresponding figures for the 7th floor.

Information on the frequency with whith the 11th floor visitors return to NYSL in a year's time is tabulated in Table 19. Half of the visitors in the average day (53 percent) have not been to NYSL before, or at least not in the previous 12 months. This is a very different pattern from the 7th floor visitors (Table 5), where the corresponding figure is below 20 percent. Another apparent difference is the absence on the 11th floor of visitors who reported repeat visits more often than once or twice a week throughout the previous year. It appears that use of the 11th floor tends to be always on a fairly unique basis, whereas use of the 7th floor is sometimes on a very frequent and regular basis.

Projections of the numbers of different persons visiting the 11th floor in periods of a week, a month, and a year were calculated from interview information on repeat visits (Table 20). Projections of total visits are shown also. While 6,500 visits are indicated in a year's time, the number of different visitors is under 3,400. Table 20 also gives the projections for the 7th floor and the projections for the 7th and 11th floors combined.

In the combined projections, the figures for total visits are derived by adding the respective visit projections for the 7th and 11th floors. However, the figures for projections

of different visitors are not strictly additive, because some visitors to NYSL use both areas of the library. The survey showed that about 40 percent of 11th floor visitors in an average day also visit the 7th floor; allowance was made for this overlap in calculating the combined projections for different visitors. The combined projections for a full year of NYSL use by visitors are 90,700 visits by 22,700 different visitors. These figures are not precise, but are indicative of the approximate total visitor use to be expected at NYSL. Comparing the combined totals to the projections for the 7th floor alone, it appears that the 11th floor traffic adds almost 8 percent to the total number of visits in a year and adds almost 10 percent to the total number of different visitors in a year.

Visitor Interests, Affiliations, Success

The main purposes for visits to the NYSL 11th floor area are listed and ranked in Table 21. Topic (subject or source) searching other than genealogy is the leading reason (47 percent), and genealogy is second (31.3 percent). The leading reason (search on a topic) is the same in rank and proportion among 7th floor visitors (Table 7). Genealogy research is proportionally more important on the 11th floor than on the 7th; however, there are actually more visits to the 7th floor for genealogy than to the 11th floor. Known-item look-up, which ranked second on the 7th floor, was almost absent on the 11th floor.

Information on reported success or failure of visits to the 11th floor is reported in Table 22, together with information on use of librarians' assistance. (Data in this table are not adjusted for time of day of interviewing.) In 52 interviews, 35 of the visits were successful; almost 70 percent. This is a somewhat lower success rate than for 7th floor visits (Table 8). Visits considered unsuccessful by 11th floor visitors came to a little under 30 percent; for the 7th floor the unsuccessful rate was 18 percent.

More than two-thirds of the successful visits made use of librarians' assistance (on the 7th floor, half made use of librarians' assistance). For unsuccessful visits, the use of librarians' assistance was a little less than two-thirds (on the 7th floor, it was exactly two-thirds). It had been intended to determine the degree to which assistance was provided by librarians at each of the three reference stations on the 11th floor; unfortunately, because

TABLE 19

FREQUENCY OF PREVIOUS VISITS
11TH FLOOR

Estimated Days of Previous Visits During Last 12 Months	Different Visitors in Av. Day	Percent of Av. Daily Visitors
0	12.0	53.5
1	.2	1.0
2	.9	4.0
3	1.3	5.9
4-5	.8	3.6
6-10	3.1	13.9
11-20	1.5	6.5
21-50	1.8	8.3
51-100	.7	3.3
101-150	—	—
151-200	—	—
201-253	—	—
	22.3	100

TABLE 20

PROJECTIONS OF VISITS AND VISITORS
— 7TH FLOOR, 11TH FLOOR, COMBINED

	11th Floor		7th Floor		Combined	
Period Projected	Visits	Diff. Visitors	Visits	Diff. Visitors	Visits	Diff. Visitors
One day	25.7	22.3	333	281	359	295
One week (5 days)	128.5	105	1670	1217	1800	1280
One month (21 days)	540	389	7000	3870	7540	4100
One year (253 days)	6500	3385	84,200	20,700	90,700	22,700

TABLE 21

MAIN PURPOSE FOR VISIT — 11TH FLOOR

Purpose	Visits Av./Day	Visits %
Look for material on a topic (not Genealogy)	12.1	47.0
Do Genealogy	8.0	31.3
Pick up photocopied material	2.0	7.6
Sightseeing, looking around	1.3	5.2
Messenger	1.2	4.6
Look for material by known author or source	.5	1.9
Other	.6	2.4
	25.7	100

TABLE 22

INTERVIEWEE REPORTS ON SUCCESS OF VISITS AND USE OF LIBRARIANS' ASSISTANCE — 11TH FLOOR
(RAW COUNTS FROM INTERVIEWS*)

Purpose	Total No. of Visits	Visit Successful		Unsure Of Success		Visit Not Successful		No. Inf. Given
		Libn Help	W/O Help	Libn Help	W/O Help	Libn Help	W/O Help	
Look up some topic	30	20	3	2		3	2	
Genealogy	17	6	3			6	2	
Pickup photocopying	2		2					
Look at known item	1						1	
Other	2		1				1	
	52	26	9	2	-	9	6	-

*Not adjusted for differences in sampling rates for interviews taken at different times of day.

of an oversight in instructing some of the research team, not all of the team actually collected such data. It was collected in 14 interviews. The findings from these interviews were that 9 visits made use of assistance from the "joint" desk, closest to the entrance; this desk is manned alternately by NYSL and Archives personnel. Also 2 visitors used the more remote NYSL desk, and 3 used the more remote Archives desk.

Table 23 lists and ranks the general topics of interest (other than genealogy) that were identified by interviewees on the 11th floor. Law was the most-mentioned topic. Local history was next. Four other topics were mentioned. This table provides only unadjusted data; it should be noted also that in 14 of the 30 relevant interviews the topic was not revealed.

Contexts of 11th floor visits are given (adjusted) in Table 24. Personal research was the context of over 45 percent of visits. For 7th floor visits, personal research was the context for less than 30 percent (Table 10). The non-government work-related context, 19.5 percent, is somewhat higher than for the 7th floor visits. New York State government activity and school-related activity are much lower on the 11th floor than on the 7th floor.

The employment status of visitors is given in Table 25. The dominant category 46.3 percent is that of persons who are not government employees, not full time students and not locally employed in the private sector. For the 7th floor, this group accounted for 15.9 percent of visits (Table 11). The percentage for locally and privately employed, 21.3 percent, is essentially the same as for 7th floor visits; the other three categories are much lower on the 11th floor.

The government agencies names as employees are tabulated, without adjustment, in Table 26. The statistics are very sparse. The Legislature is the only entity named more than once.

Places of residence reported by unaffiliated visitors are reported, without adjustment, in Table 27. Only about one third are from the Capital region, about one-half from all of New York State. The remainder are from nine states, coast to coast, and three foreign countries. This suggests a more widespread clientele, proportionally, than the 7th floor

TABLE 23

LIST OF TOPICS STUDIED BY VISITORS INTERVIEWED
— 11TH FLOOR
(RAW COUNTS FROM INTERVIEWS*)

Topic	Count
Law, Legislative History	6
Local History	4
History	2
Census Information	2
Music History	1
Geology	1
	16

*Unadjusted data from 30 interviews with persons reporting attempted research; 14 did not specify a topic. Genealogy work excluded from this tally.

TABLE 24

CONTEXT OF VISITS — 11TH FLOOR

Context	Av./Day	Percent
NY State government	4.2	16.2
Other government activity	2.1	8.1
Personal research	11.6	45.2
School activity	1.6	6.2
Work-related, non-government	5.0	19.5
Other	1.2	4.8
	25.7	100

TABLE 25

VISITOR EMPLOYMENT STATUS -- 11TH FLOOR

Status	Av./Day	Percent
With NY Legislature	1.7	6.5
Other govt. organization (NYS, US, etc.)	4.6	18.0
Private employment, Capital area	5.5	21.3
Student	2.0	7.9
None of above	11.9	46.3
	25.7	100

TABLE 26

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED ON 11TH FLOOR

Organization	Count
New York State	
Legislature	3
Education, Higher Educ.	1
Education, Museum	1
Education, SUNY Buffalo	1
NYS Department of Law	1
Federal	
Justice	1
Social Security	1
National Endowment	1

TABLE 27

PLACES OF RESIDENCE OF UNAFFILIATED VISITORS -- 11TH FLOOR
(NOT IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE, NOT STUDENTS, NOT EMPLOYED LOCALLY)

Residence	Instances* Total Count	Instances* Sight-Seeing
New York State		
Capital Region:		
Albany	3	
Schenectady	1	1
Scotia	1	
Columbia County	2	
Green County	1	
Saratoga	1	
Other:		
Glens Falls	1	
Wappinger's Falls	1	
Utica	1	
Rochester	1	
New York City	1	
Other States		
New Jersey	3	
Massachusetts	2	1
Washington, DC	1	
California	1	
Maryland	1	
Michigan	1	
Pennsylvania	1	
Virginia	1	
Wisconsin	1	
Foreign		
Greece	1	
Scotland	1	
Spain	1	
	29	2

*Raw counts from interviews. Not adjusted.

visitor group (Table 13).

Unsolicited comments made to the research staff by visitors are grouped and listed in Table 28. They are very favorable with respect to staff and service. As on the 7th floor (Table 14), there is interest in extended visiting hours, and there is mention of disappointment because certain material is not in the collection.

TABLE 28

UNSOLICITED COMMENTS BY VISITORS -- 11TH FLOOR

Topics and Comments	Instances
General Assessment	
I'm sorry I don't use NYSL more	1
Collection	
The material I want was apparently lost in fire of 1911	1
Access	
Open hours are inadequate (Saturdays)	1
Service	
Staff very helpful	2
Service very quick	1

Cautionary Reminders

The scope of this study was distinctly limited. It was not a comprehensive use study. It was concerned only with persons who actually visited NYSL. No attempt was made to study the use of NYSL by means of mail or of wire communications channels. Also, the results of this study should be used only with caution as the basis for long-term projections. The sampling period (two weeks for 7th floor visitor study, one week for the 11th floor) is far too short to warrant strong confidence that it is representative of a longer period such as a full year.

Areas for Future Study

Opportunities for worthwhile continuing studies of use of the New York State Library are numerous. The many possibilities fall into three categories:

1. More complete analysis of data already collected. Budget and schedule limitations have so far precluded correlation of all of the variables on which data were collected. Many of the correlations that have not been explored so far are of potential value. Some examples are correlations of: time of day or day of week versus type of librarian assistance used; duration or frequency of visit versus visitor affiliation or context of visit or type of use or success of visits; compatibility between users' stated date of last previous visit and the estimate of number of visits per year; State agency in which visitors are employed versus reason for visiting, success of visits, use of librarian assistance.

2. Repetition of the same kind of study in order to improve the sample and in order to test the predictive value of results obtained so far. The time period sampled so far is very short. Almost nothing has been established yet (positive or negative) about seasonal variations in NYSL use patterns, or about underlying trends in NYSL use. It would be desirable to conduct similar studies of the same general type at intervals for some considerable time to come, in order to fill in some of the seasonal sampling gaps and in order to look for basic trends. Particularly desirable are: a repeat study on the anniversary of the first (March) study; a study during the summer; studies keyed to any perceived key phases of the New York legislative or budgeting calendars; and "before" and "after" studies keyed to any planned major changes in NYSL services and facilities. Minor modifications in survey method could be acceptable or desirable, such as reductions in the proportion of 11th floor visitors to be interviewed, or requesting more detailed information on previous visits and on previous interviews in the same day. Also, it would be desirable to institute some sort of daily monitoring of visitor traffic levels in the periods between these studies. It was pointed out in this report that monitoring traffic or occupancy for only a fraction of each day might yield fairly precise information on changes in visitor traffic levels from week to week.

3. Expansion of the scope of research. The depth of interviewing of visitors might be increased in specific areas; for example, there could be fuller investigation of how visitors went about conducting subject searches, or of the types of publications they sought. The studies might be expanded also by looking at the use made of NYSL through means other than personal visits.

References

1. Lipetz, Ben-Ami, A Study of Use of the New York State Library by Visitors. Report to New York State Library, April 30, 1981. 37p. (Referred to as Report No. 1.)

2. Lipetz, Ben-Ami, User Requirements in Identifying Desired Works in a Large Library. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Library, 1970. 64p. plus appendixes

3. Lipetz, Ben-Ami, "Catalog use in a large research library." Library Quarterly 42, 129-139 (January 1972).